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BY

COVENTRY PATMORE,

AUTHOR OF "THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE."

2569.174

a

Of love, that never found his earthly close,
What sequel?

TENNYSON.

c

3865

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
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AUTHOR'S EDITION.

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BOOK I.

HONORIA.

I.

FREDERICK GRAHAM TO HIS MOTHER.

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FREDERICK GRAHAM TO HIS MOTHER.

MOTHER, I ſmile at your alarms!
Againſt my Wiltſhire Couſins' charms
I 'm ſhielded by a prior ſpell.
The fever, love, as I 've heard tell,
Like other nurſery maladies,
Is never badly taken twice.
Have you forgotten Charlotte Hayes,
My playmate in the pleaſant days
At Knatchley, and her ſiſter, Anne;
The twins, ſo made on the ſame plan,
That one wore blue, the other white,

To mark them to their father's sight;
And how, at Knatchley harvesting,
You bade me kiss her in the ring,
Like Anne and all the others? You,
That never of my sickness knew,
Will laugh, yet had I the disease,
And gravely, if the signs are these:
As, ere the Spring has any power,
The almond branch all turns to flower,
Though not a leaf is out, so she
The bloom of life provoked in me,
And, hard till then and selfish, I
Was thenceforth naught but sanctity
And service; life was mere delight
In being wholly good and right,
As she was; just, without a slur;
Honouring myself no less than her;
Obeying, in the loneliest place,
Ev'n to the slightest gesture, grace,
Assured that one so fair, so true,

Somehow he ſerved that was ſo too.
For me, hence weak towards the weak,
No more the unneſted blackbird's ſhriek
Startled the light-leaved wood; on high
Wander'd the gadding butterfly,
Unſcared by my flung cap; the bee,
Rifling the hollyhock in glee,
Was no more trapp'd with his own flower,
And for his honey ſlain. Her power,
From great things even to the graſs
Through which the unfenced footways
paſs,
Was law, and that which keeps the law,
Cherubic gayety and awe;
Day was her doing, ſo the lark
Had reaſon for his ſong; the dark
In anagram innumerous ſpelt
Her name with ſtars that throbb'd and felt;
'T was the ſad ſummit of delight
To wake and weep for her at night;

She turn'd to triumph or to ſhame
The iſſue of each childiſh game;
The heart would come into my throat
At roſebuds; howſoe'er remote,
In oppoſition or conſent,
Each thing, or perſon, or event,
Or ſeeming neutral howſoe'er,
All, in the live, electric air,
Awoke, took aſpect, and confeſſ'd
In her a centre of unreſt,
Yea, ſtocks and ſtones within me bred
Anxieties of joy and dread.
O, bright, apocalyptic ſky
O'erarching childhood! Far and nigh
Myſtery and obſcuration none,
Yet nowhere any moon or ſun!
What reaſon for theſe ſighs? What hope,
Daunting with its audacious ſcope
The diſconcerted heart, affects
Theſe ceremonies and reſpects?

Why ſtratagems in everything?
Why, why not kiſs her in the ring?
'T is nothing ſtrange that warriors bold,
Whoſe fierce, forecaſting eyes behold
The city they deſire to ſack,
Humbly begin their proud attack
By delving ditches two miles off,
Aware how the fair place would scoff
At haſty wooing; but, O child,
Why thus approach thy playmate mild!
One morning, when it fluſh'd my thought
That what in me ſuch wonder wrought
Was call'd, in men and women, love,
And, ſick with vanity thereof,
I, ſaying loud, "I love her," told
My ſecret to myſelf, behold
A criſis in my myſtery!
For, ſuddenly, I ſeem'd to be
Whirl'd round, and bound with ſhowers of threads,

As when the furious ſpider ſheds
Captivity upon the fly,
To ſtill his buzzing till he die;
Only, with me, the bonds that flew,
Enfolding, thrill'd me through and through
With bliſs beyond aught heaven can have,
And pride to call myſelf her ſlave.
A long, green ſlip of wilder'd land,
With Knatchley Wood on either hand,
Sunder'd our home from hers. This day
Joy was mine as I went that way.
I ſtretch'd my arms to the ſky, and ſprang
O'er the elaſtic ſod, and ſang
"I love her, love her!" to an air
Which with the words came, then and there;
And even now, when I would know
All was not always dull and low,
I whiſtle a turn of the ſweet ſtrain
Love taught me in that lonely lane.

Such glories fade, with no more mark
Than when the ſunſet turns to dark.
They die, the rapture and the grace
Ineffable, nor leave a trace,
Except ſometimes (ſince joy is joy,
In ſick or ſane, in man or boy)
A heart which, having felt no leſs
Than pure and perfect happineſs,
Is duly dainty of delight;
A patient, poignant appetite
For pleaſures that exceed ſo much
The poor things which the world calls
ſuch,
That, when theſe tempt it, then you may
The lion with a wiſp of hay.
That Charlotte, whom I ſcarcely knew
From Anne but by her ribbons blue,
Was loved, Anne leſs than look'd at, ſhows
That liking ſtill by favour goes!
This Love is a divinity,

And holds his high election free
Of human merit; or, let's ſay,
A child by ladies call'd to play,
But careleſs of their becks and wiles,
Till, ſeeing one who ſits and ſmiles
Like any elſe, yet only charms,
He cries to come into her arms.
Then, for my Couſins, fear me not!
None ever loved becauſe he ought.
Fatal were elſe this graceful house,
So full of light from ladies' brows.
There's Mary; Heaven in her appears
Like ſunſhine through the ſhower's laſt tears;
Mildred's of Earth, but gayer far
Than moſt men's thoughts of Heaven are;
But, for Honoria, Heaven and Earth
Seal'd amity in her ſweet birth.
The noble Girl! With whom she talks
She knights firſt with her ſmile; ſhe walks,

Stands, dances, to ſuch ſweet effect
Alone ſhe ſeems to go erect.
The brighteſt and the chaſteſt brow
Rules o'er a cheek which ſeems to ſhow
That love, as a mere vague ſuſpenſe
Of apprehenſive innocence,
Perturbs her heart; love without aim
Or object, like the holy flame
That in the Veſtals' Temple glow'd,
Without the image of a god.
And this ſimplicity moſt pure
She ſets off with no leſs a lure
Of culture, nobly ſkill'd to raiſe
The power, the pride, and mutual praiſe
Of human perſonality
Above the common ſort ſo high
It makes ſuch homely ſouls as mine
Wonder how brightly life may ſhine.
Ah, how you'd love her! Even in dreſs
She makes the common mode expreſs.

New knowledge of what's fit ſo well
'T is virtue gayly viſible!
Nay, but her ſilken ſaſh to me
Were more than all morality,
But that the old, ſweet, feverous ill
Has left me maſter of my will.

II.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MY deareſt Child, Honoria ſways
A double power, through Charlotte Hayes!
In minds to firſt-love's memory pledged
The ſecond Cupid's born full-fledged.
The Churchills came, laſt Spring, to Spa,
And ſtay'd with me a week. I ſaw,
And own I trembled for the day
When you ſhould ſee that beauty, gay
And pure as apple-blooms, that ſhow
Outſide a bluſh and inſide ſnow;
That high and touching elegance
Which even your raptures ſcarce enhance.

Ah, haſte from her enchanting ſide!
No friend for you, far leſs a bride.
But, warning from a hope ſo wild,
I wrong you. Yet this know, my child:
He that but lends his heart to hear
The muſic of a foreign ſphere,
Is thenceforth lonely, and for all
His days like one who treads the Wall
Of China, and on this hand ſees
Cities and their civilities,
And on the other lions. Well,
(Your raſh reply I thus foretell,)
Good is the knowledge of what's fair,
Though bought with temporal deſpair.
Yes, good for one, but not for two!
Will it content your wife that you
Should pine for love, in love's embrace,
Becauſe you've known a prouder grace;
Diſturb with inward ſighs your reſt,
Becauſe, though good, ſhe's not the beſt;

Her acts of fondneſs almoſt ſhun,
Becauſe they are handſomer meant than done?
You would, you think, be juſt and kind,
And keep your counſel! You will find
You cannot ſuch a ſecret keep.
'T will out, like murder, in your ſleep;
A touch will tell it, though, for pride,
She may her bitter knowledge hide;
And, whilſt ſhe accepts love's make-believe,
You'll twice deſpiſe what you'd deceive.
For your ſake I am glad to hear
You ſail ſo ſoon. I ſend you, dear,
A trifling preſent; 't will ſupply
Your Saliſbury coſts. You have to buy
Almoſt an outfit for this cruiſe!
But many are good enough to uſe
Again, among the things you ſend
To give away. My maid ſhall mend

And let you have them back. Adieu!
Tell me of all you are and do.
I know, thank God, whate'er it be,
'T will need no veil 'twixt you and me.

III.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

THE multitude of voices blythe
Of early day, the hiſſing ſcythe
Athwart the dew drawn and withdrawn,
The noiſy peacock on the lawn,
Theſe, and the ſun's eye-gladding gleam,
This morning, chaſed the ſweeteſt dream
That e'er ſhed penitential grace
On life's ſorgetful commonplace;
Yet 't was no ſweeter than the ſpell
To which I woke to ſay farewell.

Noon finds me ninety miles removed
From her who muſt not be beloved;
And us the whole ſea ſoon ſhall part,

Heaving for aye without a heart!
But why, dear mother, warn me ſo?
I love Miſs Churchill? Ah, no, no!
I view, enchanted, from afar,
And love her as I love a ſtar.
For, not to ſpeak of colder fear,
Which keeps my fancy calm, I hear,
Under her life's gay progreſs hurl'd,
The wheels of the preponderant world,
Set ſharp with ſwords that fool to ſlay
Who blunders from a poor byway,
To covet beauty with a crown
Of earthly bleſſing added on;
And ſhe's ſo much, it ſeems to me,
Beyond all women womanly,
I dread to think how he ſhould fare
Who came ſo near as to deſpair.
No more of this! Dear mother, pleaſe
To ſend my books to Plymouth. Theſe,
When I go hence, ſhall turn all hours

To profit, and amend my powers.
I've time on board to fill my poſt,
And yet make up for ſchooling loſt
Through young ſea-ſervice. They all ſpeak
German and French; and theſe, with Greek,
Which Doctor Churchill thought I knew,
And Hiſtory, which I'm ill in too,
Will ſtop a gap I ſomewhat dread,
After the happy life I've led
Among my couſins; and 't will be
To abridge the ſpace from them to me.
Yonder the ſullen veſſel rides
Where my obſcure condition hides.
Waves ſcud to ſhore againſt the wind,
That flings the ſprinkling ſurf behind;
In port the bickering pennons ſhow
Which way the ſhips would gladly go;
Through Edgecumbe Park the rooted trees

Are toſſing, reckleſs, in the breeze;
On top of Edgecumbe's firm-ſet tower,
As foils, not foibles, of its power,
The light vanes do themſelves adjuſt
To every veering of the guſt:
By me alone may naught be given
To guidance of the airs of heaven?
In battle or peace, in calm or ſtorm,
Should I my daily taſk perform,
(Better a thouſand times for love,)
Who ſhould my ſecret ſoul reprove!
Mother, I've ſtriven to conceal,
Yes, from myſelf, how much I feel;
In vain. With tears my ſight is dull,
My couſin makes my heart ſo full.
Her happy beauty makes a man
Long to lay down his life! How can
Aught to itſelf ſeem thus enough,
When I have ſo much need thereof!
Bleſt is her place! bliſsful is ſhe;

And I, departing, ſeem to be
Like the ſtrange waif that comes to run
A few days flaming near the ſun,
And carries back, through boundleſs night,
Its leſſening memory of light.
O, my dear mother! I confeſs
To a weak grief of homeleſſneſs,
Unfelt, ſave once, before. 'T is years
Since ſuch a ſhower of girliſh tears
Diſgraced me! But this wretched Inn,
At Plymouth, is ſo full of din,
Talkings and trampings to and fro.
And then my ſhip, to which I go
To-night, is no more home. I dread,
As ſtrange, the life I long have led;
And as, when firſt I went to ſchool,
And found the horror of a rule,
Which only aſk'd to be obey'd,
I lay and wept, of dawn afraid,
And thought, with burſting heart, of one

Who, from her little, wayward ſon,
Required obedience, but above
Obedience ſtill regarded love,
So change I that enchanting place,
The abode of innocence and grace
And gayety without reproof,
For the black gun-deck's lowering roof,
Blind and inevitable law,
Which makes light duties burdens, awe
Which is not reverence, laughters gain'd
At coſt of purities profaned,
And whatſoever moſt may ſtir
Remorſeful paſſion towards her,
Whom to behold is to depart
From all defect of life and heart.

By her inſtructed what may be
The joy of true ſociety,
Frightful is ſolitude; yet 't is,
Compared with ſuch infeſtment, bliſs.

But, mother, I shall go on shore,

And ſee my Couſin yet once more!
'T were wild to hope for her, you ſay?
I've torn and caſt thoſe words away.
Surely there's hope! For life 't is well
Love without hope's impoſſible;
So, if I love, it is that hope
Is not outſide the outer ſcope
Of fancy. You ſpeak truth: this hour,
I muſt reſiſt, or loſe the power.
What! and, when ſome short months are o'er,
Be not much other than before?
Decline the high, harmonious ſphere
In which I'm held, but while ſhe's dear?
In unreſpective peace forget
Thoſe eyes for which my own are wet
With that delicious, fruitful dew
Which, check'd, will never flow anew?
For daily life's dull, ſenſeleſs mood,
Slay the ſharp nerves of gratitude

And ſweet allegiance, which I owe,
Whether she cares for me or no?
Nay, Mother, I, forewarn'd, prefer
To want for all in wanting her.
For all? Love's beſt is not bereft
Ever from him to whom is left
The truſt that God will not deceive
His creature, faſhion'd to believe
The prophecies of pure deſire.
Not loſs, not death, my love shall tire.
A myſtery does my heart foretell;
Nor do I preſs the oracle
For explanations. Leave me alone,
And let in me love's will be done.

IV.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FASHION'D by Heaven and by art
So is ſhe, that ſhe makes the heart
Ache and o'erflow with tears, that grace
So wonderful ſhould have for place
The unworthy earth! To ſee her ſmile,
As ignorant of her hap the while,
And walk this howling waſte of ſin,
As only knowing the heaven within,
Is ſweet, and does for pity ſtir
Paſſion to be her miniſter;
Wherefore laſt night I lay awake,
And ſaid, "Ah, Lord! for thy love's ſake,
Give not this darling child of thine

To care leſs reverent than mine!"
And, as true faith was in my word,
I truſt, I truſt that I was heard.
The waves, this morning, ſped to land,
And ſhouted hoarſe to touch the ſtrand,
Where Spring, that goes not out to ſea,
Lay laughing in her lovely glee;
And, ſo, my life was ſunlit ſpray
And tumult, as, once more to-day,
For long farewell did I draw near
My Couſin deſperately dear.
Faint, fierce, the truth that hope was none
Gleam'd like the lightning in the ſun;
Yet, hope I had, and joy thereof!
The father of love is hope, (though love
Lives orphan'd on, when hope is dead,)
And, out of my immediate dread
And criſis of the coming hour,
Did hope itſelf draw ſudden power.

So the hot-brooding ſtorm, in Spring,
Makes all the birds begin to ſing.
Mother, your foreſight did not err:
I've loſt the world, and not won her.
And yet, ah, laugh not, when you think
What cup of life I ſought to drink!
The bold, ſaid I, have climb'd to bliſs
Abſurd, impoſſible, as this,
With naught to help them but ſo great
A heart it faſcinates their fate.
If ever Heaven back'd man's deſire,
Mine, being ſmirchleſs altar-fire,
Muſt come to paſs, and it will be
That ſhe will wait, when ſhe ſhall ſee,
This evening, how I go to get
By means unknown I know not yet
Quite what, but ground whereon to ſtand,
And plead more plainly for her hand!
While thus I raved, and caſt in hope
A ſuperſtitious horoſcope,

I reach'd the Dean's. The woman ſaid,
"Miſs Churchill's out." "Had ſhe been
dead,"
I cried, "'t were much the ſame to me,
Who go, this very night, to ſea."
"Nay, ſir, ſhe's only gone to prayer;
And here ſhe comes, acroſs the Square."
(O, but to be the unbaniſhed ſod
She daily treads, all bright from God!)
And now, though ſomething in her face
Portended "No!" with ſuch a grace
It burthen'd me with thankfulneſs,
Nothing was credible but "Yes!"
Therefore, through time's cloſe preſſure
bold,
I praiſed myſelf, and boaſtful told
My deeds at Acre, ſtrained the chance
I had of honour and advance
In war to come; and would not ſee
Sad ſilence meant "What's this to me!"

When half my precious hour was gone,
She roſe to greet a Mr. Vaughan;
And, as the image of the moon
Breaks up, within ſome ſtill lagoon
That feels the ſoft wind ſuddenly,
Or tide freſh flowing from the ſea,
And turns to giddy flames that go
Over the water to and fro,
Thus, when he took her hand to-night,
Her lovely gravity of light
Was ſcattered into many ſmiles
And flattering weakneſs. Hope beguiles
No more my heart, dear Mother. He,
By jealous looks, o'erhonour'd me!
With naught to do, and fondly fain
To hear her ſinging once again,
I ſtay'd, and turn'd her muſic o'er;
Then came ſhe with me to the door.
"Deareſt Honoria," I ſaid,
(By my deſpair familiar made,)

"Heaven bleſs you!" O, to have back
then ſtepp'd,
And fall'n upon her neck, and wept,
And ſaid, "My friend, I owe you all
I am, and have, and hope for. Call
For ſome poor ſervice; let me prove
To you, or him here whom you love,
My duty. Any ſolemn taſk,
For life's whole courſe, is all I aſk!"
Then ſhe muſt ſurely have wept too,
And ſaid, "My friend, what can you
do?"
And I ſhould have replied, "I'll pray
For you and him three times a day,
And, all day, morning, noon, and night,
My life ſhall be ſo high and right
That never Saint yet ſcaled the ſtairs
Of heaven with more availing prayers!"
But this, (and, as good God ſhall bleſs
Somehow my end, I'll do no less,)

I had no right to ſpeak. Oh, ſhame,
So rich a love, ſo poor a claim!
My Mother, now my only friend,
Farewell. The ſchool-books which you ſend
I ſhall not want, and ſo return.
Give them away, or ſell, or burn.
Addreſs to Malta. Would I might
But be your little Child to-night,
And feel your arms about me fold,
Againſt this lonelineſs and cold!

V.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MY own dear Child, Honoria's choice
Shows what ſhe is, and I rejoice
You did not win her. Felix Vaughan
Preferr'd to you? My faith is gone
In her fine ſenſe! And, thus, you ſee
You were too good for her! Ah, me,
The folly of theſe girls: they doff
Their pride to ſleek ſucceſs, and ſcoff
At far more noble fire and might
That woo them from the duſt of fight!
But now, Dear, ſince the ſtorm is paſt,
Your ſky ſhould not remain o'ercaſt.
A ſea life's dull, and, ſo, beware

Of nouriſhing, for zeſt, deſpair.
Remember, Frederick, this makes twice
You've been in love; then why not thrice,
Or ten times? But a wiſe man ſhuns
To ſay "All's over" more than once.
Religion, duty, books, work, friends,
Are anodynes, if not amends.
I'll not urge that a young man's ſoul
Is ſcarce the meaſure of the whole
Earthly and heavenly univerſe,
To which he inveterately prefers
The one beloved woman. Beſt
Speak to the ſenſes' intereſt,
Which brooks no myſtery nor delay:
Frankly reflect, my Son, and ſay,
Was there no ſecret hour, of thoſe
Paſſ'd at her ſide in Sarum Cloſe,
When, to your ſpirit's ſick alarm,
It ſeem'd that all her marvellous charm
Was marvelloufly fled? The cauſe

'T is like you ſought not. This it was:
It happen'd, for that hour, her grace
Of voice, adornment, poſture, face
Was what already heart and eye
Had ponder'd to ſatiety;
And ſo the good of life was o'er,
Until ſome laugh not heard before,
Some novel faſhion in her hair,
Or ſtyle of putting back her chair,
Reſtored the heavens. Gather thence
The loſs-conſoling inference!
I blame not beauty. It beguiles,
With lovely motions and ſweet ſmiles,
Which while they pleaſe us paſs away,
The ſpirit to lofty thoughts that ſtay,
And lift the whole of after-life,
Unleſs you take the thing to wife,
Which then ſeems naught, or ſerves to
ſlake
Deſire, as when a lovely lake

Far off ſcarce fills the exulting eye
Of one athirſt, who comes thereby,
And inappreciably ſips
The deep, with diſappointed lips.
To fail is ſorrow, yet confeſs
That love pays dearly for ſucceſs!
I blame not beauty, but complain
Of the heart, which can ſo ill ſuſtain
Delight. Our griefs declare our Fall,
But how much more our joys! They pall
With plucking, and celeſtial mirth
Can find no footing on the earth,
More than the bird of paradiſe,
Which only lives the while it flies.
Think, alſo, how 't would ſuit your pride
To have this woman for a bride.
Whate'er her faults, ſhe's one of thoſe
To whom the world's laſt poliſh owes
A further grace, which all who aſpire

To courtlieſt cuſtom muſt acquire.
The world's her duty and her ſphere;
But you have ſtill been lonely, Dear.
(Oh, law perverſe, that loneline ſs
Breeds love, ſociety ſucceſs!)
Though young, 'twere now o'er late in life
To train yourſelf for ſuch a wife;
So ſhe would fit herſelf to you,
As women, when they marry, do.
For, ſince 'tis for their dignity
Their lords ſhould ſit like lords on high,
They willingly deteriorate
To a ſtep below their rulers' ſtate;
And 'tis the commoneſt of things
To ſee an angel, gay with wings,
Lean weakly on a mortal's arm!
Honoria would put off the charm
Of cultured grace that caught your love,
For fear you ſhould not ſeem above

Herſelf in faſhion and degree,
As in true merit. Thus, you ſee,
'T were little kindneſs, wiſdom none,
To light your barn with ſuch a ſun.

VI.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

DEAR Mother, do not write her name
With the leaſt word or hint of blame.
Who elſe ſhall diſcommend her choice,
I giving it my hearty voice?
She marry me? I loved too well
To think it good or poſſible.
Ah, never near her beauties come
The buſineſs of the narrow home!
Far fly from her dear face, that ſhows
The ſunſhine lovelier than the roſe,
The ſordid gravity they wear
Who poverty's baſe burthen bear!
(And they are poor who come to miſs

Their cuſtom, though a crown be this.)
My hope was, that the wheels of fate,
For my exceeding need, might wait,
And ſhe, unſeen amidſt all eyes,
Move ſightleſs, till I ſought the prize,
With honour, in an equal field.
But then came Vaughan, to whom I yield
With grace as much as any man,
In such cauſe, to another can.
Had ſhe been mine, it ſeems to me
That I had that integrity
And only joy in her delight —
But each is his own favourite
In love! The thought to bring me reſt
Is that of us ſhe takes the beſt.
'T was but to ſee him to be ſure
That choice for her remain'd no more!
His brow, ſo gayly clear of craft;
His wit, the timely truth that laugh'd
To find itſelf ſo well expreſſ'd;

His words, abundant yet the best;
His ſpirit, of ſuch handſome ſhow
You ſaw not that his looks were ſo;
His bearing, proſpects, birth, all theſe
Might well, with ſmall ſuit, greatly pleaſe;
How greatly, when ſhe ſaw ariſe
The reflex ſweetneſs of her eyes
In his, and every breath defer
Humbly its bated life to her;
Whilſt power and kindneſs of command,
Which women can no more withſtand
Than we their grace, were ſtill unquell'd,
And force and flattery both compell'd
Her ſoftneſs! Say I'm worthy. I
Grew, in her preſence, cold and ſhy.
It awed me, as an angel's might
In raiment of reproachful light.
Her gay looks told my ſombre mood
That what's not happy is not good;
And, juſt becauſe 't was life to pleaſe,

Death to repel her, truth and eaſe
Deſerted me; I ſtrove to talk,
And ſtammered fooliſhneſs; my walk
Was like a drunkard's; once ſhe took
My arm; it ſtiffen'd, ached, and ſhook;
I gueſſ'd her thought, and could have
dropp'd;
The ſtreams of life within me ſtopp'd.
A likely wooer! Blame her not;
Nor ever ſay, dear Mother, aught
Againſt that perfectneſs which is
My ſtrength, as once it was my bliſs.
Nor let us chafe at ſocial rules.
Leave that to poets and to fools.
Clay graffs and clods conceive the roſe,
So baſe ſtill fathers beſt. Life owes
Itſelf to bread; enough thereof
And eaſy days condition love;
And, highly train'd, love's roſes thrive,
No more pale, ſcentleſs petals five,

Which moiſten the conſiderate eye
To ſee what haſte they make to die,
But heavens of brightneſs and perfume,
Which, month by month, renew the bloom
Of art-born graces, when the year
In all the natural grove is ſere.
Thank God, I partly can deſcry
The meaning of humanity!
In ſight of him who ſees it float
As many an iſolated mote
In accidental light or dark,
And wants the inſtructed ſenſe to mark
Its method, and the ear to hear
The moving muſic of its ſphere,
What wonder if his private loſs
Seems an intolerable croſs,
Not to be ſuffer'd, in mere awe
Of what he calls the world's cold law?
But he who once, with joy of ſoul,
Has had the viſion of the whole,

Though to the wringing of his heart,
Will never more prefer the part.
Blame none, then! Bright let be the air
About my lonely cloud of care.
"Religion, duty, books, work, friends:"
'T is good advice, but there it ends.
I'm ſick for what they have not got.
Send no more books; they help me not.
I'm hurt, and find no ſalve for that
In goſpels of the cricket-bat
Or anvil; and, for zoophytes,
And algæ, and Italian rights,
Myſelf and every ſoul I ſee
Are nearer, dearer myſtery,
And ſubject to my proper will,
To ſome extent, for good or ill.
And, as for work, Mother, I find
The life of man is in his mind,
(Though, truſt the ſtrains the faſhion
ſtrums,

It ſeems 't is rather in his thumbs!)
To work is well, nay, labour is,
They ſay, the bread of ſouls. If 't is,
We do not worſhip corn and yeaſt;
Indeed, they ſcarcely make a feaſt!
Bread's needful, but the rule ſtands ſo
That needful moſt is oft moſt low.
I act my calling, yet there's ſtill
A void which duty cannot fill.
What though the inaugural hour of right
Comes ever with a keen delight!
Little relieves the labour's heat,
Or crowns the labour when complete;
And life, in fact, is not leſs dull
For being very dutiful.
"The ſtately homes of England," lo,
"How beautiful they ſtand!" They owe
How much to me and ſuch as me
Their beauty of ſecurity!
But who can long a low work mend

By looking to a lofty end?
And let me, ſince 't is truth, confeſs
The want's not filled by godlineſs.
God is a tower without a ſtair,
And His perfection love's deſpair.
'T is he ſhall judge me when I die;
He ſuckles with the hiſſing fly
The ſpider; gazes patient down,
Whilſt rapine grips the helpleſs town.
His vaſt love holds all this and more.
In conſternation I adore!
Nor can I eaſe this aching gulf
With friends, the pictures of myſelf.
Then marvel not that I recur
From each and all of theſe to her.
For more of heaven than her have I
No ſenſitive capacity.
Had I but her, ah, what the gain
Of owning aught but that domain!
Nay, heaven's extent, however much,

Cannot be more than many ſuch ;
And, ſhe being mine, ſhould God to me
Say, "Lo! my Child, I give to thee
All heaven beſides," what could I then,
But, as a child, to Him complain
That, whereas my dear Father gave
A little ſpace for me to have
In his great garden, now, o'erbleſt,
I've that, indeed, but all the reſt,
Which, ſomehow, makes it ſeem I've got
All but my only cared-for plot.
Enough was that for my weak hand
To tend, my heart to underſtand.
Oh, the ſick thought, 'twixt her and me
There's nothing, and the weary ſea!

VII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

MOTHER, in ſcarcely two hours more
I ſet my foot on Engliſh ſhore,
Two years untrod! and, ſtrange to tell,
Nigh miſſ'd, through laſt night's ſtorm. There fell
A man from the ſhrouds, that roar'd to quench
Even the billows' blaſt and drench.
None elſe but me was by to mark
His loud cry in the louder dark,
Dark, ſave when lightning ſhow'd the deeps
Standing about in ſtony heaps.

No time for choice! A fortunate flaſh
Flamed as he roſe; a dizzy ſplaſh,
A ſtrange, inopportune delight
Of mounting with the billowy might,
And falling, with a thrill again
Of pleaſure ſhot from feet to brain,
And both paced deck, ere any knew
Our peril. Round us preſſ'd the crew.
"Your duty was to let him drown,"
The Captain ſaid, and feign'd a frown;
But wonder fill'd the eyes of moſt.
As if the man who had loved and loſt
Honoria dared no more than that!

My days have elſe been ſtale and flat.
This life's, at beſt, if juſtly ſcann'd,
A tedious walk by the other's ſtrand,
With, here and there caſt up, a piece
Of coral or of ambergris,
Which boaſted of abroad, we ignore
The burthen of the barren ſhore.

Often might I my letters fill
With how the nerves refuſe to thrill;
How, throughout doubly-darken'd days,
I cannot recollect her face;
How to my heart her name to tell
Is beating on a broken bell;
And, to fill up the abhorrent gulf,
Scarce loving her, I hate myſelf.
Yet, latterly, with ſtrange delight,
Rich tides have riſen in the night,
And ſweet dreams chaſed the fancies denſe
Of waking life's dull ſomnolence.
I ſee her as I knew her, grace
Already glory in her face;
I move about, I cannot reſt,
For the proud brain and joyful breaſt
I have of her. Or elſe I float
The pilot of an idle boat,
Alone with ſun, and ſky, and ſea,
And her, the fourth ſimplicity.

Or Mildred, to ſome queſtion, cries,
(Her merry miſchief in her eyes,)
"The Ball, oh, Frederick will go;
Honoria will be there!" and, lo,
As moiſture ſweet my ſeeing blurs
To hear my name ſo link'd with hers,
A mirror joins, by guilty chance,
Either's averted, watchful glance!
Or with me, in the Ball-Room's blaze,
Her brilliant mildneſs thrids the maze;
Our thoughts are lovely, and each word
Is muſic in the muſic heard,
And all things ſeem but parts to be
Of one perſiſtent harmony,
By which I'm made divinely bold;
The ſecret, which ſhe knows, is told;
And, laughing with a lofty bliſs
Of innocent accord, we kiſs;
About her neck my pleaſure weeps;
Againſt my lip the ſilk vein leaps;

Then ſays an Angel, "Day or night,
If yours you ſeek, not her delight,
Although by ſome ſtrange witchery
It ſeems you kiſs her, 't is not ſhe;
But whilſt you languiſh at the ſide
Of a fair-foul phantaſmal bride,
Surely a dragon and ſtrong tower
Guard the true lady in her bower."
And I ſay, "Dear my Lord, Amen!"
And the true lady kiſs again.
Or elſe ſome waſteful malady
Devours her ſhape and dims her eye;
No charms are left, where all were rife,
Except her voice, which is her life,
Wherewith ſhe, for her fooliſh fear,
Says trembling, "Do you love me, Dear?"
And I reply, "Ah, Sweet, I vow
I never loved but half till now."
She turns her face to the wall at this,
And ſays, "Go, Love, 't is too much bliſs."

And then a ſudden pulſe is ſent
About the ſounding firmament
In ſmitings as of ſilver bars;
The bright diſorder of the ſtars
Is ſolved by muſic; far and near,
Through infinite diſtinctions clear,
Their two-fold voices' deeper tone
Thunders the Name which all things own,
And each ecſtatic treble dwells
On one whereof none other tells;
And we, ſublimed to ſong and fire,
Take order in the wheeling quire,
Till from the throbbing ſphere I ſtart,
Waked by the beating of my heart.
Such dreams as theſe come night by night,
Diſturbing day with their delight.
Portend they nothing? Who can tell!
God yet may do ſome miracle.

'T is now two years, and ſhe's not wed,
Or you would know! He may be dead,
Or mad and wooing ſome one elſe,
And ſhe, much moved that nothing quells
My conſtancy, or, merely wroth
With ſuch a wretch, accept my troth
To ſpite him; or her beauty's gone,
(And that's my dream!) and this vile
Vaughan
Takes her releaſe; or tongues malign,
Convincing all men's ears but mine,
Have ſmirch'd her: ah, 't would move
her, ſure,
To find I only worſhipp'd more!
Nay, now I think, haply amiſs
I read her words and looks, and his,
That night! Did not his jealouſy
Show — Good my God, and can it be
That I, a modeſt fool, all bleſt,
Nothing of ſuch a heaven gueſſ'd?

Oh, chance too frail, yet frantic ſweet.
To-morrow ſees me at her feet!
Yonder, at laſt, the glad ſea roars
Along the ſacred Engliſh ſhores!
There lies the lovely land I know,
Where men and women lordlieſt grow;
There peep the roofs where more than kings
Poſtpone ſtate cares to country things,
And many a gay queen ſimply tends
The babes on whom the world depends;
There curls the wanton cottage ſmoke
Of him that drives but bears no yoke;
There laughs the realm where low and high
Are lieges to ſociety,
And life has all too wide a ſcope,
Too free a proſpect for its hope,
For any private good or ill,
Except diſhonour, quite to fill!

Poſtscript. Since this was penn'd, I read
That "Mr. Vaughan, on Tueſday, wed
The beautiful Miſs Churchill." So
That's over; and to-morrow I go
To take up my new poſt on board
The Wolf, my peace at laſt reſtored,
For all the ſhowering tears that ſoak
This paper. Grief is now the cloak
I fold about me to prevent
The deadly chill of a content
With any near or diſtant good,
Except the exact beatitude
Which love has ſhown to my deſire.
You'll point to "other joys and higher."
I hate and diſavow all bliſs
As none for me which is not this.
Think not I blaſphemouſly cope
With God's decrees, and caſt off hope.
How, when, and where can mine ſucceed?
I'll truſt He knows who made my need!

VIII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

I THOUGHT the worſt had brought
me balm,
'T was but the tempeſt's central calm.
Vague ſinkings of the heart aver
That dreadful wrong has come to her,
And o'er this whim I brood and doat,
And learn its agonies by rote.
As if I loved it, early and late
I make familiar with my fate,
And feed, with faſcinated will,
On very dregs of finiſh'd ill.
I think, ſhe's near him now, alone,
With wardſhip and protection none;

Alone, perhaps, in the hindering ſtreſs
Of airs that claſp him with her dreſs,
They wander whiſpering by the wave;
And haply now, in ſome ſea-cave
Where the ſalt ſand is rarely trod,
They laugh, they kiſs. O God! O God!
Baſeneſs of men! Purſuit being o'er,
Doubtleſs the Lover feels no more
The awful heaven of ſuch a Bride,
But, lounging, let's her pleaſe his pride
With fondneſs, guerdons her careſs
With little names, and twiſts a treſs
Round idle fingers. If 't is ſo,
Why then I'm happier of the two!
Better, for lofty loſs, like pain,
Than low content with lofty gain.
Poor, fooliſh Dove, to truſt from me
Her happineſs and dignity!
Thus, all day long till frightful night
I fear ſhe's harm'd by his delight,

And when I lay me down at even
'T is Hades lit with neighbouring Heaven.
There comes a ſmile acutely ſweet
Out of the picturing dark ; I meet
The ancient frankneſs of her gaze,
That ſimple, bold, and living blaze
Of great good-will and innocence,
And perfect joy proceeding thence !
Ah ! made for Earth's delight, yet ſuch
The mid-ſea air's too groſs to touch.
At thought of which, the ſoul in me
Is as the bird that bites a bee,
And darts abroad on frantic wing,
Taſting the honey and the ſting ;
And, moaning where all round me ſleep
Amidſt the moaning of the deep,
I ſtart at midnight from my bed —
And have no right to ſtrike him dead.
What world is this that I am in,
Where chance turns ſanctity to ſin !

'T is crime henceforward to desire
The only good, the sacred fire
Of all the universe is hell!
I hear a Voice that argues well:
"The Heaven hard has scorn'd your cry;
Fall down and worship me, and I
Will give you peace; go and profane
This pangful love, so pure, so vain,
And thereby win forgetfulness
And pardon of the spirit's excess,
Which soar'd too nigh that jealous Heaven
Ever, save thus, to be forgiven.
No Gospel has come down that cures
With better gain a loss like yours.
Be pious! Give the beggar pelf,
And love your neighbour as yourself!
You, who yet love, though all is o'er,
And she'll ne'er be your neighbour more,
With soul which can in pity smile
That aught with such a measure vile

As ſelf ſhould be at all named 'love!'
Your ſanctity the prieſts reprove,
Your caſe of grief they wholly miſs.
The Man of Sorrows names not this!
'The years,' they ſay, 'graft love divine
On the lopp'd ſtock of love like thine,
The wild tree dies not, but converts.'
So be it; but the lopping hurts,
The graff takes tardily! Men ſtanch
Meantime with earth the bleeding branch.
There's nothing heals one woman's loſs,
And lightens life's eternal croſs
With intermiſſion of ſound reſt,
Like lying in another's breaſt.
The cure is, to your thinking, low!
Is not life all, henceforward, ſo?"
Ill Voice, at leaſt thou calm'ſt my mood;
I'll ſleep! But, as I thus conclude,
The intruſions of her grace diſpel
The comfortable glooms of hell.

A wonder! Ere theſe lines were dried,
Vaughan and my Love, his three-days' Bride,
Became my gueſts. I look'd, and, lo!
In beauty ſoft as is the ſnow
And powerful as the avalanche,
She lit the deck. The Heav'n-ſent chance!
She ſmiled, ſurpriſed. They came to ſee
The ſhip, not thinking to meet me.
At infinite diſtance ſhe's my day!
What then to him? Howbeit they ſay
'T is not ſo ſunny in the ſun
But men might live cool lives thereon!
All's well; for I have ſeen ariſe
That reflex ſweetneſs of her eyes
In his, and watch'd his breath defer
Humbly its bated life to her,
His *wife*. Dear Love, ſhe's ſafe in his
Devotion; and the thought of this,

Though more than ever I admire,
Removes her out of my deſire.
They bade adieu; I ſaw them go
Acroſs the ſea; and now I know
The ultimate hope I reſted on,
The hope beyond the grave, is gone,
The hope that, in the heavens high,
At laſt it ſhould appear that I
Loved moſt, and ſo, by claim divine,
Should have her, in the heavens, for mine,
According to ſuch nuptial ſort
As may ſubſiſt in the holy court,
Where, if there are all kinds of joys
To exhauſt the multitude of choice
In many manſions, then there are
Loves perſonal and particular,
Conſpicuous in the glorious ſky
Of univerſal charity,
As Heſper in the ſunriſe. Now
I've ſeen them, I believe their vow

Immortal; and the dreadful thought,
That he leſs honour'd than he ought
Her ſanctity, is laid to reſt,
And, bleſſing them, I too am bleſt.
My good-will, as a ſpringing air,
Unclouds a beauty in deſpair;
I ſtand beneath the ſky's pure cope
Unburthen'd even by a hope;
And peace unſpeakable, a joy
Which hope would deaden and deſtroy,
Like ſunſhine fills the airy gulf
Left by the vaniſhing of ſelf.
That I have known her; that ſhe moves
Somewhere all-graceful; that ſhe loves,
And is belov'd, and that ſhe's ſo
Moſt happy; and to heaven will go,
Where I may meet with her, (yet this
I count but adventitious bliſs,)
And that the full, celeſtial weal
Of all ſhall ſenſitively feel

The partnerſhip and work of each,
And, thus, my love and labour reach
Her region, there the more to bleſs
Her laſt, conſummate happineſs,
Is guerdon up to the degree
Of that alone true loyalty
Which, ſacrificing, is not nice
About the terms of ſacrifice,
But offers all, with ſmiles that ſay,
'T were nothing if 't were not for aye!

BOOK II.

JANE.

I.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

I WEEP for your great grief, dear Boy,
And not leſs for your lofty joy.
You wanted her, my Son, for wife,
With the fierce need of life in life!
That nobler paſſion of an hour
Was rather prophecy than power;
And nature, from ſuch ſtreſs unbent,
Recurs to deep diſcouragement.
Truſt not ſuch peace yet; eaſy breath,
In hot diſeaſes, argues death;
And taſteleſſneſs within the mouth
Worſe fever ſhows than heat or drouth.
Wherefore take timely warning, Dear,

Againſt a novel danger near.
Beware leſt that "ill Voice" once more
Should plead, not vainly as before.
Wed not one woman, O my Son,
Becauſe you love another one!
Oft, with a diſappointed man,
The firſt who cares to win him can;
For, after love's heroic ſtrain,
Which tired the heart and brought no gain,
He feels conſoled, relieved, and eaſed
To meet with her who can be pleaſed
To proffer kindneſs, and compute
His acquieſcence for purſuit;
Who troubles not his lonely mood;
Aſks naught for love but gratitude;
And, as it were, will let him weep
Himſelf within her arms to ſleep.
Ah, deſperate folly! (Though, we know,
Who wed through love wed moſtly ſo.)

Before all elſe, when wed you do,
See that the woman equals you,
Nor ruſh, from having loved too high,
Into a worſe humility.
Whoſe Child, whoſe *Couſin* are you? Wait
Until this blaſt ſhall well abate!
Though love may ſeem to have wreck'd
your life,
Look to the ſalvage; take no wife
Who to your ſtooping feels ſhe owes
Her name; ſuch debts make boſom-foes.
A poor eſtate's a fooliſh plea
For marrying to a baſe degree.
A gentlewoman's twice as cheap,
As well as pleaſanter, to keep.
Nor think grown women can be train'd,
Or, if they could, that much were gain'd;
For never was a man's heart caught
By graces he himſelf had taught.
And fancy not 't is in the might

Of man to do without delight;
For ſhould you in her nothing find
To exhilarate the higher mind,
Your ſoul will clog its uſeleſs wings
With wickedneſs of lawful things,
And vampire pleaſure ſwift deſtroy
Even the memory of joy.
So let no man, in deſperate mood,
Wed a dull girl becauſe ſhe's good.
All virtues in his wife ſoon dim,
Except the power of pleaſing him,
Which may ſmall virtue be, or none!

I know, my juſt and tender Son,
To whom the dangerous grace is given
That ſcorns a good which is not heaven;
My Child, who uſed to ſit and ſigh
Under the bright, ideal ſky,
And paſs, to ſpare the farmer's wheat,
The poppy and the meadow-ſweet!
He would not let his wife's heart ache

For what was mainly his miſtake;
But, having err'd ſo, all his force
Would fix upon the hard right courſe.
I ſee you with a vulgar wife!
Or one abſorb'd in *future* life,
And in this tranſitory place
Contented with the *means* of grace;
Uncultured, ſay, yet good and true,
And therefore inward fair, and, through
The veils which inward beauty ſwathe,
All lovely to the eye of faith!
Ah, that's ſoon fagged; faith falls away,
Without the ceremonial ſtay
Of outward lovelineſs and awe.
The weightier matters of the law
She pays; mere mint and cumin not;
And, in the road that ſhe was taught,
She treads, and takes for granted ſtill
Nature's immedicable ill;
So never wears within her eyes

A falſe report of paradiſe,
Nor ever modulates her mirth
With vain compaſſion of the earth,
Which made a certain happier face
Affecting, and a gayer grace
With pathos delicately edged!
Yet, though ſhe be not privileged
To unlock for you your heart's delight,
(Her keys being gold, but not the right,)
On lower levels ſhe may do!
Her joy is more in loving you
Than being loved, and ſhe commands
All tenderneſs ſhe underſtands.
It is but when you proffer more,
The yoke weighs heavy and chafes ſore.
It's weary work enforcing love
On one who has enough thereof,
And honour on the lowlihead
Of ignorance! Beſides, you dread,
In Leah's arms, to meet the eyes

Of Rachel ſomewhere in the ſkies,
And both return, alike relieved,
To life leſs loftily conceived.
Alas, alas!
Then wait the mood
In which a woman may be woo'd
Whoſe thoughts and habits are too high
For honour to be flattery;
And ſuch would ſurely not allow
The ſuit that you could proffer now.
Her equal yoke would ſit with eaſe;
It might, with wearing, even pleaſe,
(Not with a better word to move
The indignant loyalty of love!)
She would not mope when you were gay,
For want of knowing aught to ſay;
Nor vex you with unhandſome waſte
Of thoughts ill-timed and words ill-placed;

Nor hold ſmall things for duties ſmall,
(This brands ill-breeding moſt of all,)
But, gilding uſes with delight,
And comprehending nature right,
Would mend or veil each weaker part
With ſome ſweet ſupplement of art.
Nor would ſhe bring you up a brood
Of ſtrangers bound to you by blood,
Boys of a meaner moral race,
Girls with their mother's evil grace,
But not her right to ſometimes find
Her critic paſt his judgment kind;
Nor, unaccuſtom'd to reſpect,
Which men, where 't is not claim'd, neglect,
Confirm you ſelfiſh and moroſe,
And ſlowly by contagion groſs;
But, glad and able to receive
The honour you would long to give,
Would haſten on to juſtify

Your hope of her, however high,
Whilſt you would happily incur
Compulſion to keep up with her.
Paſt price is ſuch a woman, yet
Not rare, nor hard for *you* to get;
And ſuch, in marrying, yields ſo much
It could not leſs than greatly touch
The heart of him who call'd her Bride,
With tenderneſs, and manly pride,
And ſoft, protective, fond regard,
And thoughts to make no duty hard.
Your love was wild, (but none the leſs
Praiſe be to love, whoſe wild exceſs
Reveals the honour and the height
Of life, and the ſupreme delight
In ſtore for all but him who lies
Content in mediocrities!)
To wed with one leſs loved may be
Part of divine expediency.
Many men cannot love; more yet

Cannot love ſuch as they can get,
Who ſtill ſhould marry, and do, and find
Comfort of heart and peace of mind
More than when love-ſick ſpirits dull
The force of manhood maſterful,
Which woman's ſoftneſſes require,
And women ever moſt admire.

II.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

YOUR letter, Mother, bears the date
Of ſix months back, and comes too late.
My Love, paſt all conceiving loſt,
A change ſeem'd good, at any coſt,
From lonely, ſtupid, ſilent grief,
Vain, objectleſs, beyond relief,
And like a ſea-fog ſettled denſe
On fancy, feeling, thought, and ſenſe.
I grew ſo idle, ſo deſpiſed
Myſelf, my powers, by her unprized;
Honouring my poſt, but nothing more;
And lying, when I lived on ſhore,

So late of mornings; ſharp tears ſtream'd
For ſuch ſlight cauſe,— if only gleam'd,
Remotely, ſorrowfully bright,
On clouded eves at ſea, the light
Of Engliſh headlands in the ſun,—
That ſoon I deem'd 't were better done
To lay this poor, complaining wraith
Of unreciprocated faith;
And ſo, with heart ſtill bleeding quick,
But ſtrengthen'd by the comfort ſick
Of knowing that *ſhe* could not care,
I turn'd my back on my deſpair;
And told our chaplain's daughter, Jane,—
A dear, good Girl, who ſaw my pain,
And ſpoke as if ſhe pitied me,—
How glad and thankful I ſhould be
If ſome kind woman, not above
Myſelf in rank, would give her love
To one that knew not how to woo.
Whereat ſhe, without more ado,

Bluſh'd, ſpoke of love return'd, and cloſed
With what I meant to have propoſed.
And, truſt me, Mother, I and Jane
Suit one another well. My gain
Is very great in this good wife,
To whom I'm bound, for natural life,
By hearty faith, yet croſſing not
My faith towards — I know not what!
As to the ether is the air,
Is her good to Honoria's fair;
One place is full of both, yet each
Lies quite beyond the other's reach
And recognition. Star and ſtar,
Rays croſſing, cloſer rivals are,
Sequeſter'd in their ſeparate ſpheres.
And now, except ſome caſual tears,
The old grief lives not. If you ſay,
Am I contented? Yea and nay!
For what's baſe but content to grow
With leſs good than the beſt we know?

But think me not from ſenſe withdrawn
By paſſion for a hope that's gone,
So far as to forget how much
A woman is, as merely ſuch,
To man's affection. What is beſt,
In each, belongs to all the reſt;
And though, in marriage, quite to kiſs
And half to love the cuſtom is,
'T is ſuch diſhonour, ruin bare,
The ſoul's interior deſpair,
And life between two troubles toſſ'd,
To me, who think not with the moſt;
Whatever 't would have been before
My Couſin's time, 't is now ſo ſore
A treaſon to the abiding throne
Of that ſweet love which I have known,
I cannot live ſo, and I bend
My mind perforce to comprehend
That He who gives command to love
Does not require a thing above

The ſtrength he gives. The higheſt degree
Of the hardeſt grace, humility;
The ſtep t'wards heaven the lateſt trod,
And that which makes us moſt like God,
And us much more than God behoves,
Is, to be humble in our loves.
Henceforth forever therefore I
Renounce all partiality
Of paſſion. Subject to control
Of that perſpective of the ſoul
Which God himſelf pronounces good,
Confirming claims of neighbourhood,
And giving man, for earthly life,
The cloſeſt neighbour in a wife,
I'll ſerve all. Jane be much more dear
Than others as ſhe's much more near!
Is one unlovable, and would
We love him, let us do him good!
How eaſy, then, the effect to raiſe

Where naught's amiſs but homely ways.
I love her, love her! Sweet tears come
Of this my ſelf-will's martyrdom;
And ſweet tears are love's teſt, for love
Is naught without the joy thereof.
Yet, not to lie for God, 't is true
That 't was another joy I knew
When freighted was my heart with fire
Of fond, irrational deſire
For faſcinating, female charms,
And hopeleſs heaven in two white arms.
"There's nothing half ſo ſweet in life,"
As the old ſong ſays; and I nor wife
Nor Heaven affront, if I profeſs,
That care for heaven with me were leſs
But that I'm utterly imbued
With faith of all Earth's good renew'd
In realms where no ſhort-coming pains
Expectance, and dear love diſdains
Time's treaſon, and the gathering droſs,

And laſts forever in the gloſs
Of melting.
All the bright paſt ſeems,
Now, but a viſion in my dreams,
Which ſhows, albeit the dreamer wakes,
The ſtandard of right life. Life aches
To be therewith conform'd; but, oh!
The world's ſo ſtolid, dark, and low!
That and the mortal element
Forbid its beautiful intent,
And, like the unborn butterfly,
It feels the wings, and wants the ſky.
But perilous is the lofty mood
Which cannot pull with lowly good!
Right life, for me, is life that wends
By lowly ways to lofty ends.
I well perceive, at length, that haſte
T'wards heaven itſelf is only waſte·
And thus I dread the impatient ſpur
Of aught that ſpeaks too plain of Her.

There's little here that ſtory tells;
But muſic talks of nothing elſe.
Therefore, when muſic breathes, I ſay,
(And buſier urge my taſk,) Away!
Thou art the voice of one I knew,
But what thou ſay'ſt is not yet true;
Thou art the voice of her I loved,
And I would not be vainly moved.
Thus love, which did from death ſet free
All things, now dons death's mockery,
And takes its place with things that are
But little noted. Do not mar
For me your peace! My health is high.
The proud poſſeſſion of mine eye
Departed, I am much like one
Who had by haughty cuſtom grown
To think gilt rooms, and ſpacious grounds,
Horſes, and carriages, and hounds,
Fine linen, and an eider bed

As much his need as daily bread,
And honour of men as much or more;
Till, ſtrange misfortune ſmiting ſore,
His pride all goes to pay his debts,
A lodging anywhere he gets,
And takes his wife and child thereto
Weeping, and other relics few,
Allow'd, by them that ſeize his pelf,
As precious only to himſelf.
But, ſoon, kind compenſations, all
Unlook'd for, eaſe his cruel fall;
The ſun ſtill ſhines; the country green
Has many riches, poorly ſeen
From blazon'd coaches; grace at meat
Goes well with thrift in what they eat;
And there's amends for much bereft
In better thanks for much that's left.

For Jane, dear Mother, what at firſt
You'll ſee in her is all the worſt.
I'll ſay, at once, in outward make,

She is not fair enough to wake
The wiſh for fair. She bears the bell,
However, where no others dwell;
And features ſomewhat plainly ſet,
And homely manners, leave her yet
The crowning boon and most expreſs
Of Heaven's inventive tenderneſs,
A woman. But I do her wrong,
Letting the world's eyes guide my tongue!
For, ſince 't was for my peace, I've grown
More learned in my taſte, and own
A ſort of handſomeneſs that pays
No homage to the hourly gaze,
And dwells not on the arch'd brow's height
And lids which ſoftly lodge the light,
Nor in the pure field of the cheek
Flowers, though the ſoul be ſtill to ſeek;
But ſhows as fits that ſolemn place
Whereof the window is the face:

Blankneſs and leaden outlines mark
What time the Church within is dark;
Yet view it on a Sunday night,
Or ſome occaſion elſe for light,
And each ungainly line is ſeen
Some ſpecial character to mean
Of Saint or Prophet, and the whole
Blank window is a living ſcroll.
Her knowledge and converſing powers,
You'll find, are poor. The clock, for hours,
Loud clicking on the mantel-ſhelf,
Has all the talking to itſelf.
But to and fro her needle runs
Twice, while the clock is ticking once;
And, when a wife is well in reach,
Not ſilence ſeparates, but ſpeech;
And I, contented, read, or ſmoke
And idly think, or idly ſtroke
The winking cat, or watch the fire,

In ſocial peace that does not tire;
Until, at eaſeful end of day,
She moves, and puts her work away,
And, ſaying "How cold 't is," or "How warm,"
Or ſomething elſe as little harm,
Comes, uſed to finding, kindly preſſ'd,
A woman's welcome to my breaſt,
With all the great advantage clear
Of none elſe having been ſo near.
But ſometimes, (how ſhall I deny!)
There falls, with her thus ſitting by,
Dejection, and a chilling ſhade.
Remember'd pleaſures, as they fade,
Salute me, and, in fading, grow,
Like footprints in the thawing ſnow.
I feel oppreſſ'd beyond my force
With fooliſh envy and remorſe.
I love this woman, but I might
Have loved ſome elſe with more delight;

And ſtrange it ſeems of God that He
Should make a vain capacity.
Such times of ignorant relapſe,
'T is well ſhe does not talk, perhaps.
The dream, the disſcontent, the doubt,
To ſome injuſtice flaming out,
Were 't elſe, might leave us both to moan
A kind tradition overthrown,
And dawning promiſe once more dead
In the pernicious lowlihead
Of not aſpiring to be fair.
And what am I that I ſhould dare
Diſpute with God, who moulds one clay
To honour and ſhame, and wills to pay
With equal wages them that delve
About his vines one hour or twelve!

III.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mother-in-Law, dear Fred (you've heard
I've married him) ſends love, and word
He hopes you'll come and ſee us ſoon.
Dear Fred will be on leave all June,
And, for a week, or even more,
We ſhall be very glad I'm ſure.
Dear Fred ſaid *I* muſt write. He thought
It ſeem'd ſo diſreſpectful not.
I'm ſure that's the *laſt* thing I'd be
To dear Fred's relatives. Both he
And I are well, dear Mrs. Graham,
And truſt ſincerely you're the ſame.

The houſe is rather ſmall we've got,
But dear Fred ſays that yours is not
So large by half; ſo you'll not mind.
If you can't leave your Maid behind,
Who, Fred ſays, always goes with you,
I'll manage ſomehow for her too.
You've heard of Uncle John, no doubt.
My choice, when firſt he found it out,
Diſpleaſed him, till he ſaw dear Fred,
Who, you'll be glad, he thinks well-bred,
And an extremely nice young man.
When I told Uncle John our plan
About you, of his own accord
He ſaid, "Well, Jane, you can't afford
To hire a vehicle, my Dear;
So, while your Mother-in-Law is here,
I'll ſend my carriage every day.
The turnpikes won't be much to pay."
That's the kind ſort of man, you know!
I feel quite ſure you'll like him ſo.

He's well aware your family,
Though you're not rich, is very high,
And therefore he will not neglect,
Though rich himself, all due respect.
I've heard of your dear daughter Grace,
Who died. I hope to fill her place.
You must not think, now Fred has got
A closer tie, that you will not
Be loved just like you used to be.
For my part, I am glad to see
Affection. When I have but said
Your name, I've known him turn quite
red.
If I bewail our nature's taint,
He says he has seen a faultless Saint.
Of course that's you. I think there's none
More kind and just than your dear Son,
Yet, *between us*, Fred's worldly frame
Must grieve you much, dear Mrs. Graham;
Who are, I'm sure, from all I've heard,

A veſſel choſen of the Lord.
But I have hopes of him; for, oh,
How can we ever ſurely know
But that the very darkeſt place
May be the ſcene of ſaving grace,
Which ſoftens even hearts of ſtone!
Commending you now to the Throne
Of Mercy, I remain in all,
Dear Mrs. Graham, excuſe this ſcrawl,
In greateſt haſte, but ſtill the ſame,
Your moſt affectionate JANE GRAHAM.

IV.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

I'VE dreadful news, my Siſter dear!
Frederick has married, as we hear,
Some awful girl. This fact we get
From Mr. Barton, whom we met
At Abury once. He uſed to know,
At Race and Hunt, Lord Clitheroe,
Who did not keep him up, of course,
And yet he writes, (could taſte be worſe!)
And tells John he had "ſeen Fred Graham,
Commander of the Wolf,—the ſame
The Meſs call'd Joſeph,—with his Wife

Under his arm." He lays his life,
"The fellow married her for love,
For there was nothing elſe to move.
H. is her Shibboleth. 'T is ſaid
Her Mother was a Kitchen-Maid."
Poor Fred! What *will* Honoria ſay?
She thought ſo highly of him. Pray
Tell it her gently, for I'm ſure
That, in her heart, ſhe liked him more
Than all her Couſins. I've no right,
I know you hold, to truſt my ſight;
But Frederick's ſtate could not be hid!
And Felix, coming when he did,
Was lucky; for Honoria, too,
Was almoſt gone. How warm ſhe grew
On "worldlineſs," when once I ſaid
I fancied that in love poor Fred
Had taſtes much better than his means!
His hand was worthy of a Queen's,
Said ſhe, and actually ſhed tears

The night he left us for two years,
And ſobb'd, when aſk'd the cauſe to tell,
That "Frederick look'd ſo miſerable."
He *did* look very dull, no doubt,
But ſuch things girls don't cry about.
What weathercocks men always prove!
You're quite right not to fall in love.
I never did, and, truth to tell,
I don't think it reſpectable.
The man can't underſtand it, too!
He likes to be in love with you,
But ſcarce knows how, if you love him,
Poor fellow! When it's woman's whim
To ſerve her huſband night and day,
The kind ſoul lets her have her way.
So, if you wed, as ſoon you ſhould,
Be ſelfiſh for your huſband's good!
Happy the men who relegate
Their pleaſures, vanities, and ſtate
To *us*. Their nature ſeems to be

To enjoy themſelves by deputy,
For, ſeeking their own benefit,
Dear, what a meſs they make of it!
A man will work his bones away,
If but his wife will only play;
He does not mind how much he's teaſed,
So that his plague looks always pleaſed
And never thanks her, while he lives,
For anything, but what he gives!
It's hard to manage men, we hear!
Believe me, nothing's eaſier, Dear.
The moſt important ſtep by far
Is finding what their colours are.
The next is, not to let them know
The reaſon why they love us ſo.
The indolent droop of a blue ſhawl,
Or gray ſilk's fluctuating fall,
Covers the multitude of ſins
In me; *your* huſband, Love, might wince
At azure, and be wild at ſlate,

And yet do well with chocolate.
Of courſe you'd let him fancy he
Adored you for your piety!
There, now I've ſaid enough, my Dear
To make you hate me for a year.
You need not write to tell me ſo.
Yours fondly, MILDRED CLITHEROE.

V.

JANE TO HER MOTHER.

JANE TO HER MOTHER.

DEAR Mother, Frederick's all, and more,
A great deal, than you ſay, I'm ſure;
And, as you write, of courſe I ſee
How glad and thankful I ſhould be
For ſuch a huſband. Yet, to tell
The truth, I am ſo miſerable!
There ſurely muſt be ſome miſtake.
What *could* he ſee in me to take
His fancy! I remember, though,
He never ſaid he loved me. No,
I'm no more fit for Frederick's wife
Than Queen of England. If my life

Could ſerve his very ſlighteſt whim,
I'm ſure I'd give it up for him
With pleaſure; but what *ſhall* I do!
I find that he's ſo great and true
That everything ſeems falſe and wrong
I've done and thought my whole life long;
And ſo, though he is often kind,
And never really croſs, my mind
Is all ſo dull and dead with fear
That Yes and No, when he is near,
Is much as I can ſay. He's quite
Unlike what moſt would call polite,
And yet, when firſt I ſaw him come
To tea in Aunt's fine drawing-room,
He made me feel ſo common. Oh,
How dreadful if he thinks me ſo!
It's no uſe trying to behave
To him. His eye, ſo kind and grave,
Sees through and through me! Could
not you,

Without his knowing that I knew,
Aſk him to ſcold me now and then?
Mother, it's ſuch a weary ſtrain
The way he has of treating me,
As if 't was ſomething fine to be
A woman; and appearing not
To notice any faults I've got,
But leaving me to mend, or bear
The guilt unblamed. I'm quite aware,
Of courſe, he knows I'm plain, and ſmall,
Stupid, and ignorant, and all
Awkward and mean. As Frederick theſe,
I ſee the beauty which he ſees
When often he looks ſtrange awhile,
And recollects me with a ſmile.
I wiſh he had that fancied Wife,
With me for Maid, now! all my life
To dreſs her out for him, and make
Her beauty lovelier for his ſake.
To have her rate me till I cried;

Then ſee her ſeated by his ſide,
And driven off proudly to the Ball;
Then to ſtay up for her, whilſt all
The ſervants were aſleep; and hear
At dawn the carriage rolling near,
And let them in; and hear her laugh,
And boaſt he ſaid that none was half
So beautiful, and that the Queen,
Who danced with him the firſt, had ſeen
And noticed her, and aſk'd who was
That lady in the golden gauze!
And then to go to bed, and lie
In a ſort of heavenly jealouſy,
Until 't was broad day, and I gueſſ'd
She ſlept, nor knew how ſhe was bleſſ'd.
Mother, I look and feel ſo ill;
And ſoon I ſhall be uglier ſtill,
You know. But I have heard that men
Never think women ugly then.
Pray write and tell me if that's true.

And pardon me for teaſing you
About my ſilly feelings ſo.
Pleaſe, Mother, never let him know
A word of what I write. I'd not
Complain, but for the fear I've got
Of going wild, as I've heard tell
Of ſome one ſhut up in a cell,
With no one elſe to talk to. He,
Finding that he was loved by me
The moſt, might think himſelf to blame;
And I ſhould almoſt die for ſhame.
When I get up, — that's now at ſeven,
And 't is not light, — my heart's like heaven
At times; for I've a fooliſh whim
That Fred loves me as I love him,
And, though I'm neither fair nor wiſe,
Love, ſomehow, makes a woman nice.
But daylight makes the glaſs reflect
The fact; and then I recollect

That often in the night things ſeem
Which are not, though we do not dream.
If being good would ſerve — but oh!
The thought's ridiculous, you know.
Why, I myſelf, I never could
See what's in women's being good.
They've nothing in the world to do
But as it's juſt their nature to.
Now, when the men, you know, do right,
They have to try with all their might.
They're ſo much nobler! As for us,
We don't deſerve the leaſt the fuſs
They make about us.
Mother, mind
You muſt not think that he's unkind.
Why, I would rather Frederick
Should hate me, beat me with a ſtick,
Than ſtop at home all day and coo,
As Aunt likes Uncle John to do.
I'm never prouder, after all,

Than when he ſtands, ſo ſtern and tall,
Before the fire. With buſy lives,
Men can't love like their idle wives!
And, oh, how dull, whilſt they were out,
Had women naught to cry about!

VI.

DR. CHURCHILL TO FREDERICK.

DR. CHURCHILL TO FREDERICK.

DEAR Nephew, we have heard your news
From ſtrangers! Be aſſured we uſe
Not lightly to relax our love
Where once 't is bound; and I approve
Your reaſons, whatſoe'er they be,
For ſilence. Yield no leſs to me
For ſaying I wiſh, with all my heart,
Your happineſs, and on the part
Of Mary, who is ſtill at home,
Whenever you may chooſe to come
And bring your Wife, you both will find
A welcome couſinly and kind.

As an old man, a relative,
And churchman, I make free to give
My bleſſing, burthen'd with the truth
For want of which the fragile youth
Of wedlock ſuffers ſhocks and fears,
That ſwell the heart with needleſs tears.
I'll not ſuppoſe that rareſt chance
Has fall'n which makes a month's romance.
Few, if 't were known, wed whom they would;
And this, like all God's laws, is good.
For naught's ſo ſad the whole world o'er
As much love which has once been more.
Glorious for warmth and light is love;
But worldly things in the rays thereof
Extend their ſhadows, every one
Falſe as the image which the ſun
At noon or eve dwarfs or protracts.
A perilous lamp to light men's acts!

By Heaven's kind, impartial plan,
Well wived is he that's truly man,
If but the woman's womanly,
As ſure I am your choice muſt be.
Luſt of the eyes and pride of life
Perhaps ſhe's not. The better wife!
If it be thus, if you have known
(As who has not?) ſome heavenly one
Whom the dull background of deſpair
Help'd to ſhow forth ſupremely fair;
If Memory, ſtill remorſeful, ſhapes
Young Paſſion bringing Eſchol grapes
To travellers in the Wilderneſs,
This truth will make regret the leſs:
Mighty in love as graces are,
God's ordinance is mightier far;
And he who is but juſt and kind
And patient, ſhall for guerdon find,
Before long, that the body's bond
Is all elſe utterly beyond

In power of love to actualize
The ſoul's bond which it ſignifies,
And even to deck a wife with grace
External in the form and face.
A five years' wife and not yet fair?
Blame let the man, not Nature, bear!
For as the ſun, warming a bank
Where laſt year's graſs droops gray and dank,
Evokes the violet, bids diſcloſe
In yellow crowds the freſh primroſe,
And foxglove hang her flufhing head,
So vernal love, where all ſeems dead,
Makes beauty abound.
Nor was that naught,
That trance of joy beyond all thought,
The viſion, in one, of womanhood;
But for all women holding good!
Should marriage ſuch a prologue want,
'T were ſordid and moſt ignorant

Profanity; but, having this,
'T is honour now, and future bliſs.
Life, as a child, is put to play
Love's ſimple gamut day by day.
If on this humble taſk he dwells,
Not flying off to ſomething elſe,
But as the Maſter bids, devotes
To theſe few oft-repeated notes,
His practice, till ſuch comes to be
His ſubtle, ſmooth celerity
That from his eaſy hand they are flung
Like bead-rows by a touch unſtrung,
The Maſter, after many days,
Beyond hope ſpeaks, "Now go thy ways;
And, in thy ſafe and finiſh'd art,
Take, with the chime of heaven, thy part.

VII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

MOTHER, on my returning home
Laſt night, I went to my wife's room,
Who, whiſpering me that our alarms
Were over, put into my arms
Your Grandſon. And I give you joy
Of what, I'm told, is a fine boy.
Their notion that he's juſt like me
Is neither fact nor flattery!
To you I'll own the little wight
Fill'd me, unfatherly, with fright,
So grim it gazed, and out of the ſky
There came, minute, remote, the cry,

Piercing, of original pain.
I put the wonder back to Jane,
Who proffer'd, as in kindly courſe,
Untried amends for ſtrange divorce.
It gueſſ'd at once, by great good luck,
The clever baby, how to ſuck!
Yet Jane's delight ſeem'd daſh'd, that I,
Of ſtrangers ſtill by nature ſhy,
Was not familiar quite ſo ſoon
With her ſmall friend of many a moon.
But when the new-made Mother ſmiled,
She ſeem'd herſelf a little child,
Dwelling at large beyond the law
By which, till then, I judged and ſaw,
And that fond glow which ſhe felt ſtir
For it, ſuffuſed my heart for her;
To whom, from the weak babe, and thence
To me, an influent innocence,
Happy, reparative of life,
Came, and ſhe was indeed my wife,

As there lovely with love ſhe lay,
Brightly contented all the day
To hug her ſleepy little boy
In the reciprocated joy
Of touch, the childiſh ſenſe of love,
Ever inquiſitive to prove
Its ſtrange poſſeſſion, and to know
If the eyes' report be really ſo.
She wants his name to be like mine,
But I demur, at twenty-nine,
To being call'd "Old Frederick."
Her father's, Richard, would be "Dick;"
So John has now been fix'd upon,
After her childleſs Uncle John,
Who owns the Grimſley Powder-Mill,
And, perhaps, may put him in his Will.
'T is alſo ſettled, ſince the mind,
As Jane has heard, may be refined,
In babyhood, by ſights that lull
The ſenſes with the Beautiful,

That John muſt be refined at once.
No fault of ours if he's a dunce!
She covets, in the ſhower-bath's place,
A marble image of a Grace,
Or, if that coſts too much, a caſt;
But we are both agreed, at laſt,
'T will do to pin a certain ſhawl,
Too gay to wear, againſt the wall,
And let him learn to kick and coo
At lovely ſtripes of red and blue.
And, ſince Nurſe ſays that, now-a-days,
Boys learn, at ſchool, ſuch wicked ways,
Our John's to be brought up at home.
Nor muſt he take to ſea, but ſome
Leſs perilous and reſtleſs life,
Which will not part him from his wife;
The Law might give his talents play!
It's clear he's clever from the way
He looks about, and frowns, and winks,
Which ſhows that he obſerves and thinks.

VIII.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mother, — ſuch, if you'll allow,
In *love*, not *law*, I'll call you now, —
I hope you're well. I write to ſay
Frederick has got, beſides his pay,
A good appointment in the Docks;
Alſo to thank you for the frocks
And ſhoes for baby. I, D. v.,
Shall wean him ſoon. Fred goes to ſea
No more. I *am* ſo glad; becauſe,
Though kinder huſband never was,
He ſeems ſtill kinder to become
The more he ſtays with me at home.

When we've been parted, I ſee plain
He's dull till he gets uſed again
To marriage. Do not tell him, though;
I would not have him know I know,
For all the world.
How good of you
Not, as I've heard ſome mothers do,
To hate his wife! I try to mind
All your advice; but ſometimes find
I do not well know how. I thought
To take it about dreſs; ſo bought
A gay new bonnet, gown, and ſhawl;
But Frederick was not pleaſed at all;
For, though he ſmiled, and ſaid, "How
ſmart!"
I feel, you know, what's in his heart.
But I ſhall learn! I fancied long
That care in dreſs was very wrong,
Till Frederick, in his ſtartling way
When I began to blame, one day,

The Admiral's wife, because we hear
She spends two hours, or something near,
In dressing, took her part, and said
How all things deck themselves that wed;
How birds and plants grow fine to please
Each other in their marriages;
And how (which certainly is true —
It never struck me — did it you?)
Dress was, at first, Heaven's ordinance,
And has much Scripture countenance.
For Eliezer, we are told,
Adorn'd with jewels and with gold
Rebecca. In the Psalms, again,
How the King's Daughter dress'd! And, then,
The Good Wife in the Proverbs, she
Made herself clothes of tapestry,
Purple, and silk: and there's much more
I had not thought about before!
It's strange how well Fred understands

A Book I don't ſee in his hands
At all, except at Church.
Do you know,
Since Baby came, he loves me ſo!
I'm really uſeful, now, to Fred;
And none could do ſo well inſtead.
It's nice to fancy, if I died,
He'd miſs me from the Darling's ſide!
Alſo, there's ſomething now, you ſee,
On which we talk, and quite agree;
On which, without pride too, I can
Hope I am wiſer than a man.
I ſhould be happy now, if quite
Convinced that Frederick was right
About religion; but he's odd,
And very ſeldom ſpeaks of God;
And, though I truſt his prayers are ſaid,
Becauſe he goes ſo late to bed,
I doubt his calling. Glad to find
A text adapted to his mind,

I ſhow'd him Thirty-three and four
Of Chapter ſeven, firſt of Cor.,
Which ſeems to allow, in Man and Wife,
A little worldlineſs of life.
He ſmiled, and ſaid that he knew all
Such things as that without Saint Paul!
And once he ſaid, when I with pain
Had got him juſt to read Romaine,
"Men's creeds ſhould not their hopes condemn.
Who wait for heaven to come to them
Are little like to go to heaven,
If logic's not the devil's leaven!"
I cried at ſuch a wicked joke,
And he, ſurpriſed, went out to ſmoke.
But to judge him is not for me,
Who ſin myſelf ſo dreadfully
As half to doubt if I ſhould care
To go to heaven, and he not there.
He *muſt* be right; and I dare ſay

I ſoon ſhall underſtand his way.
To other things, once ſtrange, I've grown
Accuſtom'd, nay, to like. I own
'T was long before I grew well uſed
To ſit, while Frederick read or muſed
For hours, and ſcarcely ſpoke. When he,
For all that, held the door to me,
Picked up my handkerchief, and roſe
To ſet my chair, with other ſhows
Of honour, ſuch as men, 't is true,
To ſweethearts and fine ladies do,
It almoſt ſeem'd an unkind jeſt;
But now I like theſe ways the beſt.
They ſomehow help to make me good;
And I don't mind his quiet mood.
If Frederick *does* ſeem dull awhile,
There's Baby. You ſhould ſee him ſmile!
I'm pretty and nice to him, ſweet Pet,
And he will learn no better yet;
And when he's big and wiſe, you know,

There'll be new babes to think me ſo,
Indeed, now little Johnny makes
A buſier time of it, and takes
Our thoughts off one another more,
I'm happy as need be, I'm ſure!

BOOK III.

RACHEL.

I.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mrs. Graham, the fever's paſt,
And we're all well. I, in my laſt,
Forgot to ſay that, while 't was on,
A lady, call'd Honoria Vaughan,
One of Fred's Saliſbury Couſins, came.
Had I, ſhe aſk'd me, heard her name?
'T was that Honoria, no doubt,
Whom Fred would ſometimes talk about
And ſpeak to, when his nights were bad,
And ſo I told her that I had.
She look'd ſo beautiful and kind!
And ſo much like the wife my mind
Was fond of picturing for Fred,

Thoſe wretched years we firſt were wed,
Before I gueſſ'd, or uſe could prove,
The ſort of things my huſband loved;
And how juſt living with me was,
In ſome ſtrange way, the deareſt cauſe
For liking, and, inſtead of charms,
Was being accuſtom'd to my arms;
And even how my getting ill,
And nervous, croſs, and uglier ſtill,
And bringing him all kinds of care,
Affected him like growing fair;
And how, by his brave fingers preſſ'd,
The bliſter, that would burn my breaſt
And only make his own to ſmart,
Drew the proud fleſh from either's heart;
And ſo, for all indignities
Of life in health and in diſeaſe,
His friendlineſs got more and more!
Of this great joy to make quite ſure,
I aſk'd once, (when he could not ſee,)

Why ſuch things made him fond of me?
He kiſſ'd me and ſaid, the honour due
To the weaker veſſel ſurely grew
With the veſſel's weakneſs!
I'll go on,
However, about Mrs. Vaughan.
Viſiting, yeſterday, ſhe ſaid,
The Admiral's Wife, ſhe learn'd that Fred
Was very ill; ſhe begg'd to be,
If poſſible, of uſe to me.
What could ſhe do? Laſt year, Fred's Aunt
Died, leaving her, who had not a want,
Her fortune. Half was his, ſhe thought;
But Fred, ſhe knew, would ne'er be brought
To take his rights at ſecond-hand!
Yet ſomething might, ſhe hoped, be plann'd

With me, which even Frederick,
As favour done to *her*, would like.
What did I think of putting John
To ſchool and college? Mr. Vaughan,
When John was old enough, could give
Preferment to her relative,
In Government or Church. I ſaid
I felt quite ſure that deareſt Fred
Would be ſo thankful. Would we come,
And make ourſelves, then, quite at home,
Next month, at High-Hurſt? Change of air
Both he and I ſhould need, and there
At leiſure we could talk, and fix
Our plans, as John was nearly ſix.
It ſeemed ſo rude to think and doubt,
So I ſaid, Yes. In going out,
She ſaid, "How odd of Frederick, Dear,"
(I wiſh'd he had been there to hear,)
"To ſend no cards, or tell me what

A nice new Coufin I had got!
Was'nt that kind?
When Fred grew ſtrong,
I had, I found, done very wrong.
For the firſt time, his voice and eye
Were angry. But, with folks ſo high
As Fred and Mrs. Vaughan and you,
It's hard to gueſs what's right to do!
And he won't teach me.
Dear Fred wrote,
Directly, ſuch a lovely note,
Which, though it undid all I'd done,
Was, both to me and Mrs. Vaughan,
So kind! His words, I can't ſay why,
Like ſoldiers' muſic, made me cry.
Do, Mother, aſk dear Fred to go
Without me! I can't leave, you know,
The babes. Beſides, 't were folly ſtark
For *me* to go to High-Hurſt Park.
I'm not ſo awkward as I was;

But, all confuſed, and juſt becauſe
By chance he call'd me "Love" to-day,
I made ſuch haſte out of his way
I overſet my chair; whereat
Fred laugh'd, and on the ſpitting cat
The fire-ſcreen tumbled; ſo I tried
Theſe riſks no more, and ſtood and cried,
And hid for ſhame my burning face,
To hear he liked "that kind of grace."
Fancy if ſuch a thing was done
Where ladies move like Mrs. Vaughan!
But deareſt Fred *ſhould*, once a year,
Juſt get a ſight of his own ſphere.

II.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

DEAR Saint, I'm ſtill at High-Hurſt Park.
The houſe is fill'd with folks of mark.
Honoria ſuits a good eſtate
Much better than I hoped. How fate
Pets her with happineſs and pride!
And ſuch a loving lord, beſide!
But, between us, Sweet, everything
Has limits, and to build a wing
To this old houſe, when Courtholm ſtands
Empty upon his Berkſhire lands,
And all that Honor might be near

Papa, was buying love *too* dear.
And yet, to ſee mild Mrs. Vaughan
Shining on all ſhe looks upon,
You'd think that none could ſtand more high
Than others in her charity;
And to behold her courtly lord
Converſe with her acroſs the board,
'T would ſeem that part of perfect life
Was not to covet one's own wife.
The hypocrites!
Love, there are two
Gueſts here, whoſe names will ſtartle you,
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Graham!
I thought he ſtay'd away for ſhame.
He and his wife were aſk'd, you know,
And would not come, four years ago.
You recollect Miſs Smythe found out
Who ſhe had been, and all about

The Chaplain and the Powder-Mill,
And how the fine Aunt tried to inſtil
Haut ton, and how, at laſt, poor Jane
Had got ſo ſhy and *gauche* that, when
The Dockyard gentry came to ſup,
She always had to be lock'd up;
And ſome one wrote to John and ſaid
Her mother was a Kitchen-Maid.
Dear Mary, you'll be charm'd to know
It *muſt* be all a fib. But, oh,
She *is* the oddeſt little Pet
On which my eyes were ever ſet!
She's ſo *outrée* and natural
That, when ſhe firſt arrived, we all
Wonder'd, as when a robin comes
In through the window to eat crumbs
At breakfaſt with us. She has ſenſe,
Humility, and confidence;
And, ſave in dreſſing juſt a thought
Gayer in colours than ſhe ought,

(To-day ſhe looks a croſs between
Gypſy and Fairy, red and green,)
All that ſhe does is ſomehow well.
And yet one never quite can tell
What ſhe *might* do or utter next.
Lord Clitheroe is much perplex'd;
Her huſband, every now and then,
Looks nervous; all the other men
Are charm'd. Yet ſhe has neither grace,
Nor one good feature in her face.
Her eyes, indeed, flame in her head,
Like very altar-fires to Fred,
Whoſe ſtep ſhe follows everywhere,
Like a tame duck, to the deſpair
Of Colonel Holmes, who does his part
To break her funny little heart.
Honor's enchanted. 'T is her view
That people, if they're good and true,
And treated well, and let alone,
Will kindly take to what's their own,

And always be original,
Like children. (Honor's juſt like all
The reſt of us! But, thinking ſo,
It's well ſhe miſſ'd Lord Clitheroe,
Who hates originality,
Though he puts up with it in me!)
Poor Mrs. Graham has never been
To the Opera! You ſhould have ſeen
The innocent way ſhe told the Earl
She thought Plays ſinful when a girl,
And now ſhe never had a chance!
Frederick's complacent ſmile and glance
Towards her, ſhow'd me, paſt a doubt,
Honoria had been quite cut out.
It's very odd; for Mrs. Graham,
Though Frederick's fancy none can blame,
Seems the *laſt* woman you'd have thought
Her lover would have ever ſought!
She never reads, I find, nor goes

Anywhere; ſo that I ſuppoſe
She came at all ſhe ever knew
By lapping milk, as kittens do.
  Talking of kittens, by the by,
You've much more influence than I
With dear Honoria. Get her, Dear,
To be a little more ſevere
With thoſe ſweet children. They've the run
Of all the houſe. When ſchool was done,
Maude burſt in, while the Earl was there,
With "O Mamma, do be a bear!"
They come on with the fruit, and climb
In people's laps, and all the time
Eat, and we ladies have to riſe,
Leſt Frank ſhould die of ſtrawberries.
  And there's another thing, my Love,
I wiſh you'd ſhow you don't approve,
(But perhaps you do!) Though all confeſs
Her tact is abſolute in dreſs,

She does not get her things ſo *good*
As, with her fortune now, ſhe ſhould.
I feel quite certain, between us,
She cheats her huſband, (ſhe did thus
With dear Papa,) and has no end
Of pin-money, full half to ſpend
On folks who think themſelves in this
Paid takers of her tolls to Bliſs.

She has her faults, but I muſt ſay
She's handſomer, in her quiet way,
Than ever! This odd wife of Fred
Adores his old love in his ſtead.

III.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

MOTHER, at laſt, we are really come
To High-Hurſt. Johnny ſtays at home.
We ſettled that it muſt be ſo,
For he has been to Aunt's, at Stowe,
And learn'd to leave his h's out;
And people like the Vaughans, no doubt,
Would think this dreadful. I, at firſt,
Half fear'd this viſit to the Hurſt.
Fred muſt, I knew, be ſo diſtreſſ'd
By aught in me unlike the reſt
Who come here. But I find the place
Delightful; there's ſuch eaſe and grace

And kindneſs, and all ſeem to be
On ſuch a high equality.
They have not got to think, you know,
How far to make the money go.
But Frederick ſays it's leſs the expenſe
Of money, than of ſound good ſenſe,
Quickneſs to care what others feel,
And thoughts with nothing to conceal;
Which I'll teach Johnny. Mrs. Vaughan
Was waiting for us on the Lawn,
And kiſſ'd and call'd me "Couſin." Fred
Neglected his old friends, ſhe ſaid.
He laugh'd, and redden'd up at this.
She was, I think, a flame of his;
But I'm not jealous! Luncheon done,
I left him, who had juſt begun
To talk about the chance of war,
With an old Lady, Lady Carr,—
A Counteſs, but I'm more afraid,
A great deal, of the Lady's maid,—

And went with Mrs. Vaughan to ſee
The pictures, which appear'd to be
Of ſorts of horſes, boors, and cows
Call'd Wouvermans, and Cuyps, and Dows.
And, then, ſhe took me up, to ſhow
Her bedroom, where, long years ago,
A Queen ſlept. 'T is all tapeſtries
Of Cupids, Gods, and Goddeſſes;
And black, carved oak. A curtain'd door
Leads, thence, into her bright boudoir,
Where even her huſband may but come
By favour. He, too, has his room,
Kept ſacred to his ſolitude.
Did I not think the plan was good?
She aſk'd me; but I ſaid how ſmall
Our houſe was, and that, after all,
Though Fred would never ſay his prayers
At night, till I was ſafe upſtairs,
I thought it wrong to be ſo ſhy
Of being good when I was by.

"Oh, you ſhould humour him!" ſhe ſaid,
With her ſweet voice and ſmile; and led
The way to where the children ate
Their dinner, and Miſs Williams ſate.
She's only Nurſery-Governeſs,
Yet they conſider her no leſs
Than Lord or Lady Carr, or me.
Juſt think how happy ſhe muſt be!
The Ball-Room, with its painted ſky,
Where heavy angels ſeem to fly,
Is a dull place; its ſize and gloom
Make them prefer, for drawing-room,
The Library, all done up new
And comfortable, with a view
Of Saliſbury Spire between the boughs.
When ſhe had ſhown me through the houſe,
(I wiſh I could have let her know
That ſhe herſelf was half the ſhow,
She *is* ſo handſome and ſo kind,)

She had the children down, who had dined,
And, taking one in either hand,
Show'd me how all the grounds were plann'd.
The lovely garden gently ſlopes
To where a curious bridge of ropes
Croſſes the Avon to the Park.
We reſted by the ſtream, to mark
The brown backs of the hovering trout.
Frank tickled one, and took it out
From under a ſtone. We ſaw his owls,
And awkward Cochin China fowls,
And ſhaggy pony in the croft;
And then he dragg'd us to a loft,
Where pigeons, as he puſh'd the door,
Fann'd clear a breadth of duſty floor,
And ſet us coughing. I confeſs
I trembled for my nice ſilk dreſs.
I cannot think how Mrs. Vaughan

Ventured with that which ſhe had on,—
A mere white wrapper, with a few
Plain trimmings of a tranquil blue,
But, oh, ſo pretty! Then the bell
For dinner rang. I look'd quite well,
("Quite charming" were the words Fred
ſaid,)
In the new gown that I've had made
At Saliſbury. In the drawing-room
Was Mr. Vaughan, juſt then come home.
I thought him rather cold, but find
That he's at heart extremely kind.
He's Captain of the Yeomanry,
And Magiſtrate, and has to ſee
About the paupers and the roads;
And Fred ſays he has written odes
On Mrs. Vaughan, to ſend her praiſe,
Like Laura's, down to diſtant days.
So ſhe deſerves! What cauſe there is,
I know not, though, for ſaying this,

But that ſhe looks ſo kind and young,
And every word's a little ſong.
I *am* ſo proud of Frederick,
He's ſo high-bred and lordly-like
With Mrs. Vaughan! He's not quite ſo
At home with me; but that, you know,
I can't expect, or wiſh. 'T would hurt,
And ſeem to mock at my deſert.
Not but that I'm a duteous wife
To Fred; but in another life,
Where all are fair that have been true,
I hope I ſhall be graceful too,
Like Mrs. Vaughan. And, now, Good-bye.
That happy thought has made me cry.

IV.

HONORIA VAUGHAN TO DR. CHURCHILL.

HONORIA VAUGHAN TO DR. CHURCHILL.

DEAREST Papa, at laſt we are come,
The tireſome ſeaſon over, home!
How honourable it ſeems to me!
I am ſick of town ſociety,
The Opera, and the flatteries
Of cynic, diſreſpectful eyes!
Frederick is here. Tell Mrs. Fife;
Who adored him. He has brought his wife.
She *is* ſo nice; but Felix goes
Next Sunday with her to the Cloſe,
And you will judge her. She the firſt

Has made me jealous, though the Hurſt
Is lit ſo oft with lovelineſs,
And, when in town, where I was leſs
Conſtrain'd in choice, I always aſk'd
The prettieſt. Felix really baſk'd
Like Puſs in fire-ſhine, when the room
Was all aflame with female bloom ;
And, ſince I praiſed and did not pout,
His little, lawleſs loves went out
With the laſt brocade. 'T is not the ſame,
I find, with Mrs. Frederick Graham !
I muſt not have her ſtopping here
More than a fortnight once a year.
My huſband ſays he never ſaw
Such proof of what he holds for law,
That beauty is love which can be ſeen.
Whatever he by this may mean,
Were it not fearful if he fell
In love with her on principle !

Felix has ſpoken only twice:
Once on Savoy, and once on this
Shameful Reform Bill; and on each
He made a moſt ſucceſsful ſpeech;
And both times I, of courſe, was there
And heard him cheer'd. But, (how unfair!)
Whenever, wiſhing to explain
His meaning, he got up again,
They call'd out "Order," and "Oh, oh!"
He abuſed the Newſpapers, and ſo
The "Times" left out the cries of "Hear."
The very Oppoſition cheer
Dear Felix; and at what he ſaid
The Arch-Radical turn'd white and red.
I ſaw him with my opera-glaſs.
Yet they allow'd the law to paſs
The ſecond reading. Should this cheat
Succeed next ſpring, we loſe our ſeat!
Nor ſhall I grieve. The wiſeſt ſay

There's near at hand an evil day;
And, though, if Felix choſe to ſtir,
I am ſure he might be Miniſter,
I tell him, they ſerve England moſt
Who keep, at whatſoever coſt,
Their honour; and, when beſt and firſt
Have flung their ſtrength to laſt and worſt,
And ruling means, from hour to hour
Cajoling thoſe who have the power,
A gentleman ſhould ſtay at home,
And let his rulers ſometimes come
And bluſh at his high privacy.
Felix, I know, agrees with me,
Although he calls me, "Fierce white cat!"
And ſays, 't is not yet come to that.
Yeſterday, he and I fell out;
Can you believe it? 'T was about
The coſt at which he ſays I dreſſ'd
Laſt ſeaſon. *I* came off the beſt;
And you, Papa, by both ſtand taſk'd

Inſtead, as you ſhall learn: I aſk'd,
Would he, at one houſe, think it nice
To ſee me in the ſame dreſs twice?
Of courſe he kiſſ'd me, and ſaid, "No!"
And then I proved, *he* made me go
To Lady Lidderdale's three fetes
And both her dances! *Magiſtrates*
Ought to know better than to try
A charge diſmiſſ'd; and he and I
Had talk'd this over once before!
Forgiv'n, he vow'd to offend no more.
But, oh, he actually ſays
You caution'd him againſt my ways:
We both are ſhock'd Papa could be
So cruel and unfatherly!

V.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

COULD any, whilſt there's any woe,
Be wholly bleſt, the Vaughans were ſo!
Each is, and is aware of it,
The other's endleſs benefit;
But, though their daily ways reveal
The depth of private joy they feel,
'T is not their bearing each to each
That does abroad their ſecret preach,
But ſuch a lovely good-intent
To all within their government
And friendſhip, as, 't is well diſcern'd,
Each of the other muſt have learn'd;

For no mere faith of neighbourhood
Ever begot ſo fair a mood.
Honoria, made more dove-like mild
With added loves of lord and child,
Is elſe unalter'd. Years, that wrong
The reſt, touch not her beauty, young
With youth that ſeems her natal clime,
And no way relative to time.
All in her preſence generous grow,
As in the ſunſhine flowers blow;
As colours, each ſuperb to ſight,
When all combined are only light,
Her many noble virtues miſs
Proud virtue's blazon, and are bliſs;
The ſtandards of the depth are furl'd;
The powers and pleaſures of the world
Pay tribute; and her days are all
So high, pure, ſweet, and practical,

She almoſt ſeems to have, at home,
What's promiſed of the life to come.
And fair, in fact, ſhould be the few
God dowers with nothing elſe to do;
And liberal of their light, and free
To ſhow themſelves, that all may ſee!
For alms let poor men poorly give
The meat whereby men's bodies live;
But they of wealth are ſtewards wiſe
Whoſe graces are their charities.
The ſunny charm about this home
Makes all to ſhine who thither come.
My own dear Jane has caught its grace,
And does an honour to the place.
Acroſs the lawn I lately walk'd
Alone, and watch'd where moved and talk'd,
Gentle and goddeſs-like of air,
Honoria and ſome ſtranger fair.
I choſe a path away from theſe;

When one of the two Goddeſſes,
With my wife's voice, but ſofter, ſaid,
"Will you not walk with us, dear Fred?"
She moves, indeed, the modeſt peer
Of all the proudeſt ladies here.
'T is wonderful ſhe ſhould not be
Put out by ſuch fine company.
We daily dine with men who ſtand
Among the leaders of the land,
And women beautiful and wiſe,
With England's greatneſs in their eyes.
To high, traditional good-ſenſe,
And knowledge vaſt without pretence,
And human truth exactly hit
By quiet and concluſive wit,
Liſtens my little, homely dove,
Miſtakes the points, and laughs for love.
You ſhould have ſeen the vain delight,
After we went upſtairs laſt night,

With which ſhe ſtood and comb'd her
hair,
And call'd me much the wittieſt there!
With reckleſs loyalty, dear Wife,
She lays herſelf about my life!
The joy I might have had of yore
I have not; for 't is now no more,
With me, the lyric time of youth,
And glad ſenſation of the truth;
Yet, beyond hope or purpoſe bleſt,
In my raſh choice, let be confeſſ'd
The tenderer Providence that rules
The fates of children and of fools!
I kiſſ'd the kind, warm neck that ſlept,
And from her ſide this morning ſtepp'd,
To bathe my brain from drowſy night
In the ſharp air and golden light.
The dew, like froſt, was on the pane.
The year begins, though fair, to wane.
There is a fragrance in its breath

Which is not of the flowers, but death,
And green above the ground appear
The lilies of another year.
I wandered forth, and took my path
Among the bloomleſs aftermath;
And heard the ſteadfaſt robin ſing,
As if his own warm heart were ſpring,
And watch'd him feed where, on the yew,
Hung ſugar'd drops of crimſon dew;
And then return'd, by walls of peach
And pear-trees bending to my reach,
And roſe-buds with the roſes gone,
To bright-laid breakfaſt. Mrs. Vaughan
Was there, none with her. I confeſs
I love her rather more than leſs!
But ſhe alone was loved of old;
Now love is twain, nay, manifold;
For, ſomehow, he whoſe daily life
Adjuſts itſelf to one true wife,
Grows to a nuptial, near degree

With all that's fair and womanly.
Therefore, as more than friends, we met
Without conſtraint, without regret;
The wedded yoke that each had donn'd
Seeming a ſanction, not a bond.

VI.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

A MAN'S taſkmaſters are enough!
Add not yourſelf to the hoſt thereof.
This did you ever from the firſt,
As now, in venturing to the Hurſt.
You won, my child, from weak ſurpriſe,
A vigour to be doubly wiſe
In wedlock: with ſucceſs, then, ceaſe,
Nor riſk the triumph and the peace.
'T is not pure faith that hazards even
The adulterous hope of change in heaven.
Your love lacks joy, your letter ſays.
Yes; love requires the focal ſpace

Of recollection, or of hope,
Ere it can meaſure its own ſcope.
Too ſoon, too ſoon, comes Death to ſhow
We love more deeply than we know!
The rain, that fell upon the height
Too gently to be call'd delight,
Within the dark vale reappears,
As a wild cataract of tears;
And love in life ſhould try to ſee
Sometimes what love in death would be!
(Eaſier to love, we ſo ſhould find,
It is, than to be juſt and kind!)
She's cold. Put to the coffin-lid.
What diſtance for another did,
That death has done for her! The good,
Once gazed upon with heedleſs mood,
Now fills with tears the famiſh'd eye,
And turns all elſe to vanity.
'T is ſad to ſee, with death between,

The good we have paſſ'd, and have not
ſeen!
How ſtrong appear the words of all!
The looks of thoſe that live appall.
They are the ghoſts, and check the breath;
There's no reality but death,
And hunger for ſome ſignal given
That we ſhall have our own in heaven!
But this the God of love lets be
A horrible uncertainty.
How great her ſmalleſt virtue ſeems,
How ſmall her greateſt fault! Ill dreams
Were thoſe that foil'd with loftier grace
The homely kindneſs of her face.
'T was here ſhe ſat and work'd, and there
She comb'd and kiſſ'd the children's hair;
Or, with one baby at her breaſt,
Another taught, or huſh'd to reſt.
Praiſe does the heart no more refuſe
To the divinity of uſe.

Her humbleſt good is hence moſt high
In the heavens of fond memory;
And love ſays Amen to the word,
A prudent wife is from the Lord.
Her worſt gown's kept, ('t is now the beſt,
And that in which ſhe ofteneſt dreſſ'd,)
For memory's ſake more precious grown
Than ſhe herſelf was for her own.
Poor wife! fooliſh it ſeem'd to fly
To ſobs inſtead of dignity,
When ſhe was hurt. Now, more than all,
Heart-rending and angelical
That ignorance of what to do,
Bewilder'd ſtill by wrong from you.
(For what man ever yet had grace
Ne'er to abuſe his power and place?)
No magic of her voice or ſmile
Raiſed in a trice a fairy iſle.
But fondneſs for her underwent
An unregarded increment.

Like that which lifts, through centuries,
The coral reef within the ſeas,
Till, lo! the land where was the wave.
Alas! 't is everywhere her grave.

VII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

AT Jane's deſire, left High-Hurſt Park
Should make our cottage cold and dark,
After three weeks we came away
To ſpend at home our Wedding-Day.
Twelve wedding-days gone by, and none
Yet kept, to keep them all in one,
She and myſelf, (with John and Grace
On donkeys,) viſited the place
I firſt drew breath in, Knatchley Wood.
Bearing the baſket, ſtuff'd with food,
Milk, loaves, hard eggs, and marmalade,
I halted where the wandering glade

Divides the thicket. There I knew,
It ſeem'd, the very drops of dew
Below the unalter'd eglantine.
Nothing had changed ſince I was nine!
In the green deſert, down to eat
We ſat, our ruſtic grace at meat
Good appetite, through that long climb
Hungry two hours before the time.
And there Jane took her ſtitching out,
And John for birds' neſts look'd about,
And Grace and Baby, in between
The warm blades of the breathing green,
Dodged graſshoppers; and I no leſs,
In conſcientious idleneſs,
Enjoy'd myſelf, under the noon
Stretch'd, and the ſounds and ſights of June
Receiving, with a drowſy charm,
Through muffled ear and folded arm.
And then, as if I ſweetly dream'd,
I half remember'd how it ſeem'd

When I, too, was a little child
About the wild wood roving wild.
Pure breezes from the far-off height
Melted the blindneſs from my ſight,
Until, with rapture, grief, and awe,
I ſaw again as then I ſaw.
As then I ſaw, I ſaw again
The harveſt wagon in the lane,
With high-hung tokens of its pride
Left in the elms on either ſide;
The daiſies coming out at dawn
In conſtellations on the lawn;
The glory of the daffodil;
The three black windmills on the hill,
Whoſe magic arms, flung wildly by,
Sent magic ſhadows paſt the rye.
Within the leafy coppice, lo,
More wealth than miſers' dreams could ſhow,
The blackbird's warm and woolly brood,

Five golden beaks agape for food;
The Gypſies, all the ſummer ſeen
Native as poppies to the Green;
The winter, with its froſts and thaws
And opulence of hips and haws;
The lovely marvel of the ſnow;
The Tamar, with its altering ſhow
Of gay ſhips ſailing up and down,
Among the fields and by the Town.
And, dearer far than anything,
Came back the ſongs you uſed to ſing.
(Ah, might you ſing ſuch ſongs again,
And I, your child, but hear as then,
With conſcious profit of the gulf
Flown over from my preſent ſelf!)
And, as to men's retreating eyes,
Beyond high mountains higher riſe,
Still farther back there ſhone to me
The dazzling duſk of infancy.
Thither I look'd, as, ſick of night,

The Alpine ſhepherd looks to the height,
And does not ſee the day, 't is true,
But ſees the roſy tops that do.
Meantime Jane ſtitch'd, and fann'd the flies
From my repoſe, with huſh'd replies
To Grace, and ſmiles when Baby fell.
Her countenance love viſible
Appear'd, love audible her voice.
Why in the paſt alone rejoice,
Whilſt here was wealth before me caſt
Which, as you ſay, if 't were but paſt
Were then moſt precious! Queſtion vain
When aſk'd again and yet again,
Year after year; yet now, for no
Cauſe, but that heaven's bright winds will blow
Not at our beck, but as they liſt,
It brought that diſtant, golden miſt
To grace the hour, firing the deep

Of ſpirit and the drowſy keep
Of joy, till, ſpreading uncontain'd,
The holy power of ſeeing gain'd
The outward eye, this owning even,
That where there's love and truth there's heaven.
Debtor to few, far-ſeparate hours
Like this, that truths for me are powers,
(Ah, happy hours, 't is ſomething yet
Not to forget that I forget!)
I know their worth, and this, the chief,
I count not vain becauſe 't was brief.
And now a cloud, bright, huge, and calm,
Roſe, doubtful if for bale or balm;
O'ertoppling crags, portentous towers
Appear'd at beck of viewleſs powers
Along a rifted mountain range.
Untraceable and ſwift in change,
Thoſe glittering peaks, diſrupted, ſpread

To ſolemn bulks, ſeen overhead;
The ſunſhine quench'd, from one dark form
Fumed the appalling light of ſtorm.
Straight to the zenith, black with bale,
The Gypſies' ſmoke roſe deadly pale;
And one wide night of hopeleſs hue
Hid from the heart the recent blue.
And ſoon, with thunder crackling loud,
A flaſh within the formleſs cloud
Show'd vague receſs, projection dim,
Lone ſailing rack, and ſhadowy rim.
We ſtood ſafe group'd beneath a ſhed.
Grace hid behind Jane's gown for dread,
Who told her, fondling with her hair,
"The naughty thunder, God took care
It ſhould not hurt good little girls."
At this Grace re-arranged her curls;
But John, diſputing, ſeem'd to me
Too much for Jane's theology,

Who bade him watch the tempeſt. Now
A blaſt made all the woodland bow;
Againſt the whirl of leaves and duſt
Kine dropp'd their heads; the tortured
guſt
Jagg'd and convulſed the aſcending ſmoke
To mockery of the lightning's ſtroke.
The blood prick'd, and a blinding flaſh
And cloſe, co-inſtantaneous craſh
Humbled the ſoul, and the rain all round
Reſilient dimm'd the whiſtling ground,
Nor flagg'd in force from firſt to laſt,
Till, ſudden as it came, 't was paſt,
Leaving a trouble in the copſe
Of brawling birds and tinkling drops.
Change beyond hope! Far thunder
faint
Mutter'd its vaſt and vain complaint,
And gaps and fractures fringed with light
Show'd the ſweet ſkies, with ſquadrons
bright

Of cloudlets glittering calm and fair
Through gulfs of calm and glittering air.
With this adventure, we return'd.
The roads the feet no longer burn'd.
A wholeſome ſmell of rainy earth
Refreſh'd our ſpirits, tired of mirth.
The donkey-boy drew friendly near
My wife, and, touch'd by the kind cheer
Her countenance ſhow'd, or ſooth'd perchance
By the ſoft evening's ſad advance,
As we were, ſtroked the flanks and head
Of the aſs, and, ſomewhat thick-voiced, ſaid,
"To 'ave to wop the donkeys ſo
'Ardens the 'art, but they won't go
Without!" My wife, by this impreſſ'd,
As men judge poets by their beſt,
When now we reach'd the welcome door,
Gave him his hire, and ſixpence more.

VIII.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mother, I juſt write to ſay
We've paſſ'd a moſt delightful day,
As, no doubt, you have heard from Fred.
(Once, you may recollect, you ſaid,
True friendſhip neither doubts nor doats,
And does not read each other's notes;
And ſo we never do!) I'll miſs,
For Fred's impatient, all but this:
We ſpent — the children, he, and I —
Our wedding anniverſary
In the woods, where, while I tried to keep
The flies off, ſo that he might ſleep,
He actually kiſſ'd my foot, —

At leaſt, the beautiful French boot,
Your gift, — and, laughing with no cauſe
But pleaſure, ſaid I really was
The very niceſt little wife;
And that he prized me more than life.
When Fred once ſays a thing, you know,
You feel ſo ſure it muſt be ſo,
It's almoſt dreadful! Then on love,
And marriage, and the world above,
We talk'd; for, though we ſeldom name
Religion, both now think the ſame.
O Mother, what a bar's removed
To loving and to being loved!
For no agreement really is
In anything when none's in this.
Why, once, if dear, dear Frederick preſſ'd
His wife againſt his hearty breaſt,
The interior difference ſeem'd to tear
My own, until I could not bear
The trouble. Oh! that dreadful ſtrife,

It ſhow'd indeed that faith is life.
Fred never felt this. If he did,
I'm ſure it could not have been hid;
For wives, I need not ſay to you,
Can feel juſt what their huſbands do,
Without a word or look. But then
It is not ſo, you know, with men.
And now I'll tell you how he talk'd,
While in the Wood we ſat or walk'd.
He told me that "The Sadducees
Inquired not of true marriages
When they provoked that dark reply,
Which now coſts love ſo many a ſigh.
In vain would Chriſt have taught ſuch clods
That Cæſar's things are alſo God's!"
I can't quite think that happy thought,
It ſeems ſo novel, does it not?
Fred only means to ſay, you know,
It *may*, for aught we are told, be ſo.

He thinks that joy is never higher
Than when love worſhips its deſire
Far off. His words were: "After all,
Hope's mere reverſal may befall
The partners of His glories who
Daily is crucified anew:
Splendid privations, martyrdoms
To which no weak remiſſion comes,
Perpetual paſſion for the good
Of them that feel no gratitude,
Far circlings, as of planets' fires,
Round never to be reach'd deſires,
Whatever rapturouſly ſighs
That life is love, love ſacrifice."
And then, as if he ſpoke aloud
To ſome one looking from a cloud,
"All I am ſure of heaven is this,
Howe'er the mode, I ſhall not miſs
One true delight which I have known.
Not on the changeful earth alone

Shall loyalty remain unmoved
T'wards everything I ever loved.
So Heaven's voice calls, like Rachel's voice
To Jacob in the field, 'Rejoice!
Serve on ſome ſeven more ſordid years,
Too ſhort for wearineſs or tears;
Serve on; then, O Beloved, well-tried,
Take me forever for thy bride!'"
You ſee, though Frederick ſometimes ſhocks
One's old ideas, he's orthodox.
Was it not kind to talk to me
So really confidentially?
Soon ſilent, as before, he lay,
But I felt giddy all the day,
And now my head aches; ſo farewell!
Poſtſcript. — I've one thing more to tell:
Fred's teaching Johnny algebra!
The rogue already treats mamma

As if he thought her, in his mind,
Rather ſilly, but very kind.
Is not that nice? It's ſo like Fred!
Good-bye! for I'm to go to bed,
Becauſe I'm tired, or ought to be.
That's Frederick's way of late. You ſee
He really loves me after all.
He's growing quite tyrannical!

THE END.

JAN 8 1927